THE Minstrel of the North

OR,

CUMBRIAN LEGENDS.

BEING A

POETICAL MISCELLANY

OF

Legendary, Gothic, and Romantic, Tales.



By J. STAGG, Esq.



Upon the summit of the hill
  Along the margin of the lake,
Or by the windings of the rill,
  Wild Fancy may her rambles take;
Or 'midst the ruins once renown'd,
  The cloister, or the dreary cell,
The food of Genius may be found,
  For there the Muses love to dwell.



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1810.

TO HIS GRACE

THE

DUKE OF NORFOLK.

MY LORD,

THE universal benevolence, and suavity of manners, which so justly characterise your Grace, could alone have emboldened me to present myself to your attention. Your uncommon partiality to the inhabitants of, and to every thing connected with, the county of Cumberland, is the only motive which has prompted the author (a native of that county) to offer this Work to your protection and patronage. Upon its merits, my Lord, I am silent. Unaided, and unknown in the great world, I have occasion

for, and do solicit, your patronage. The avowal which I had the pleasure of hearing you make, at the last Cumberland Anniversary, of your esteem for my native country and countrymen, combined with your Grace's goodness on every other occasion, leave me no room to doubt that you will pardon this application, presented with the profoundest respect, by,

My Lord,

Your very humble

and obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFATORY APOLOGY.



As the privation of sight has naturally precluded me from attending, with any degree of accuracy, either to the composition, correction, or revision, of this work, I doubt not, nay, I am certain, that a number of errors must have inevitably escaped my observation, as well in the transcription as in the typography; but when the candid and benevolent public come to reflect on the numberless difficulties with which I have had to combat, I hope they will not long hesitate to pardon and overlook the many imperfections they will necessarily meet with.

If this volume were destined to fall into the hands of the critics alone, I should have but very little hopes of mercy; as I am sensible that the Judges in Literature, like those in the Law, are bound, by the duties of their profession, to give judgement impartially, tho' lenity is much more becoming in both than severity. But it is not to these literary arbitrators I refer myself. The public are my judges; and to that tribunal alone I shall make my appeal. If, from the numerous

and respectable numbers who have honoured me with their attention and patronage, I may be allowed to form any presage, I would venture to predict, that the reception of my book would not be the most unfavourable. How far the general tenor of these pieces may be approved, I shall not presume to say; but the present perversion of taste, and the *romance mania* so prevalent now-a-days, almost demonstrates to me, that Essays of a more serious and regular nature would not be universally received with such a degree of encouragement. The avidity with which the works of Lewis, Wadsworth, Southey, and Scott, are at present perused, determined me to attempt this species of composition; and as there are a great many historical and romantic legends existing in Cumberland; with a number of other Gothic stories prevalent in the North, the scenes and subjects of which were unfixed and unconnected with any particular spot, I felt myself convinced, that a versification of these stories, which in some manner were topographical, and to localize others, would not prove ungratifying to a great number of readers, especially the admirers of Gothic and romantic literature. How far I have been successful, the world will soon inform me; and on its candour and clemency are founded all my expectations. I know there is a great disparity in the pieces, and that some are very inferior to others

in point of poetical merit; but the flattering assurances I had from many of my friends, previous to my ever thinking of publishing them, together with the encomiums and encouragement given me by several members of the University of Oxford, during my stay in that city, made me resolve to venture myself and my work on the candour and benevolence of the public. I have a number of pieces yet untranscribed, and several others in a half-digested state.' I purpose speedily to publish them in a second volume, or else to republish the whole in two volumes, with appropriate, annotations, corrections, and emendations.

To the numerous and respectable list of Gentlemen, who have honoured me with their subscriptions, I shall ever confess the highest obligation, and am, with the profoundest respect,

Their most obliged

And very humble servant,

J. STAGG.

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THE

Minstrel of the North.

THE

HERMIT OF ROCKCLIFFE,

A Legendary Tale.

IN FOUR CANTOS.

CANTO I.

THE ev'ning low'r'd, the wind blew hard,
    And furious roar'd the tide;
Fast homeward to his humble shed
    The weary ploughman hied.

And madly Esk* and Eden ran,
    Swoll'n by the falling rain,
When Alfred led fair Imogen,
    Bewilder'd, o'er the plain.

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* The Esk and Eden, two rivers; the one rising in Westmoreland, and the other in the southern part of Scotland; their waters join a little above Bowness, in Cumberland, and, by their confluence, and the junction of some other streams, constitute what is called Solway Frith.

On either side a river roar'd;
Dismay'd, they walk'd between;
For neither to the right nor left
One glimpse of light was seen!

But, lost amidst surrounding gloom,
With unknown steps they sped;
Unconscious of the way they went,
And stupified with dread.

At length, when sinking with their fears,
They spied a glimm'ring light;
Which seem'd at no great distance thence,
And cheer'd their longing sight.

Young Alfred call'd with all his might.
The rocks re-echoed round;
An answering voice return'd the call,
With kind-inviting sound.

'Twas Edmund, hermit of the hill,
In Rockcliffe known of yore,
Whose hospitable cottage still
Receiv'd the wand'ring poor.

Once noted was this holy man,
For piety and pray'r;
T'instruct the blind, and aid the weak,
Was his peculiar care.

The wand'ring pair pursued the light,
And soon attain'd the hill;
The friendly Hermit at his cell
Receiv'd them with good will.

For them, with heaps of added turf,
He mends his homely fire;
Their suff'rings and their wants to sooth,
Appear'd his sole desire.

With frugal, but with wholesome food,
The table soon was spread,
And whilst they ate, their kindly host
Prepar'd their humble bed.

And now, refresh'd, the cheerful group
In various converse join'd;
The angry storm that howl'd without,
No more the pilgrims mind.

The cautious hermit then began
To ask the youthful pair,
By what misfortune or mischance
So late they travell'd there.

When thus, young Alfred soft replied,
" Most rev'rend father, wait
With patience, and th' eventful tale
To you I will relate.

"Sincé Bannockbourn's* unhappy day,
The Scots, but ill at rest,
Of England's weakness well aware,
The borders sore infest.

"Poor Cumberland, the most expos'd
Has felt in many a fray;
Our towns they burn, our flocks and herds
By force they drive away.

"Three days are scarcely past and gone,
Since a ferocious band,
Of wild freebooters from the North,
Invaded Cumberland.

"Thro' Brough the bold banditti sped,
Rude rapine mark'd their course,
To Orton, and to Dalston next,
For none could check their force.

"As in their unresisted route
Before them all recoil,
And of our cattle, and our corn,
They swept a mighty spoil.

* Bannockbourn, near Stirling; where was fought the memorable battle between the English, commanded by Edward the Second, and the Scots by Robert Bruce, in which the former, though upwards of a hundred thousand strong, were defeated, and totally routed by the latter, though not above thirty thousand.

"To brave Sir Barnard's hall they march'd,
Which undefended lay,
And his fair daughter Imogene
They, captive, bore away.

"Alarm and horror loudly rang
Throughout the ravag'd land;
For no collected force had we,
These ruffians to withstand.

"At length the neighb'ring barons heard:
Enrag'd, their powers they rose;
And forth their num'rous vassals led,
Their progress to oppose.

"But, when the Northerns understood
That Cumbria's chieftains led
An army forth, to check their course,
To Scotland back they sped.

"By Bowness bent their tardy march;
Their plunder went before;
And, fording through the Solway, soon
Regain'd the Scottish shore.

"Nor long behind the English force
In idle dalliance staid,
But, urg'd by fury and revenge,
With speed for Scotland made.

"Nor long we vainly sought the foe,
Who slowly onward wound;
And, sore encumber'd by their spoils,
Had gain'd but little ground.

"At our approach, like base-born slaves,
Their plunder they forsook;
Nor far the cowards we pursu'd,
But all the spoil re-took.

"All, save the lovely Imogene,
Who, held by ruffian force,
A fierce freebooter, screaming, bore
Away upon his horse.

"With love and vengeance doubly fir'd,
I urg'd my nimble steed;
And, turning by a nearer path,
Pursued them with all speed.

"Soon the bold ravisher I charg'd,
For, by one deadly blow,
My faulchion trench'd his sever'd crest,
And lifeless laid him low!

"Half dead with horror and despair,
The rescued maid I bore
Triumphant to the place, where late
We had encamp'd before.

"But how was I surpris'd and vex'd,
To find our party gone,
And we, amidst a hostile land,
Unsuccour'd, left alone.

"The western sun o'er Criffel's* brow
Glanc'd his departing ray;
What should be done!—the foe was near,
And dang'rous was delay.

"Unknown, unaided, and forlorn,
We left the fated place;
And, back to Cumbria, by the route
We went, our way retrace.

"But, as athwart the moorland waste,
The way was ill to find,
With moss and quagmire interspers'd,
I left my horse behind.

"With Phœbus' last departing ray,
We forded thro' the Sarke;†
But e'er we well had pass'd the Esk,
'Twas grown completely dark.

* Criffel, a very high mountain in the south-west borders of Scotland.

† Sarke, a small river which empties itself into the Esk near Gretna-Green, and which, for a few miles in that neighbourhood, divides Scotland from England.

"When quite bewilder'd in despair,
We trac'd the sandy coast;
And, but for your directing light,
Had certainly been lost.

"But, since your hospitable cell
A kind asylum lends,
Our future gratitude, I hope,
Shall make you full amends.

"Our home, if heav'n permit, we may
Reach with to-morrow's light;
And Imogene again shall glad
An anxious father's sight."

"But who art thou, advent'rous youth?"
The rev'rend Hermit cried;
"What is thy lineage, to what house
Art thou by birth allied?

"For, if from actions aught we may
Of pedigree divine,
Thine would bespeak thee of a class
Above the vulgar line."

To whom, young Alfred, courteous youth,
Thus modest made reply—
"Of no distinguish'd high descent
Or family am I.

"In fact, my birth is quite obscure;
My origin is low;
That I the parents never knew
To whom I being owe.

"A father's kindness I ne'er felt,
Nor shar'd a mother's fears,
For in Sir Barnard's hall I've liv'd
From my most infant years."

"Alas, my son!" the Hermit cried,
"How like my own, thy fate!
But may it never be thy lot
To know my wretched state!

"For mine has been a life of woe;
Eventful as severe,
From my nativity till now
That you behold me here.

"And since the ardent flame of love,
So plainly is display'd,
That in thy youthful bosom burns,
Towards that beauteous maid;

"Perhaps my more than common tale
To thee may useful prove,
And caution thee to shun those ills
That spring from misplac'd love.

"Tho' the recital may produce
To mem'ry new born pain,
Yet, for your 'vantage, will I tell
My tale of woes again.

THE HERMIT'S TALE.

CANTO II.

"CHILD of obscurity, and doom'd
Thro' life to feel distress,
My infancy commenc'd in woe,
Nor age has suffer'd less.

"As on a fair autumnal morn,
Sir Michael of the Moor
Arose, to join the cheerful chace,
He found me at his door;

"Within a wicker-basket stow'd,
And wrapt with curious care;
A medal, pendant from my neck,
The name of EDMUND bear.

"But none could tell who brought me there,
Or guess from whence I came;
The only information left
Was barely of my name.

"The knight he took me to his hall,
And gave me to his wife;
And, with a parent's fondness, watch'd
My helpless infant life.

"Nor in my education aught,
Or pastime ever spar'd;
For I, in common with his own,
Each fond indulgence shar'd.

"Meanwhile, brought up with fost'ring care,
To manhood fast I grew,
Each manly art and exercise
Accustom'd to pursue.

"Full fast, full fleet, without alloy,
My years of youthhood run,
For, till fourteen, had I suppos'd
Myself Sir Michael's son.

"Indeed, his kindness and his care
So taught me to believe;
And, till the fatal truth I knew,
I ne'er had cause to grieve.

" But, when I luckless came to know
Th' obscureness of my name,
My youthful ardour fled, and left
My cheek suffus'd with shame.

" In solitude I mourn'd my lot,
In silence sigh'd my woe,
And all from Providence I sued
Was, but myself to know.

" With kindly care Sir Michael strove
My sorrows to suppress,
And each amusing effort tried,
To soothe my sad distress.

" A thousand arts to lull my grief,
My gen'rous patron tried,
And wheresoe'er the Baron went,
I still was by his side.

" The brave Sir Guy de Morville once,
So chanc'd it to befall,
My noble foster-father had
Invited to his hall.

" As to promote my happiness,
Seem'd chiefly his intent,
So, since the visit promis'd fair,
To Brough with him I went.

"Sir Guy de Morville was a knight
Of whom the world might say,
That England's realm a braver peer
Possess'd not in his day.

"The grandson of the brave Sir Hugh,*
Our second Henry's friend,
By whom imperious Becket met
His just but tragic end.

"Near Brough his stately castle stood,
Magnificent in show,
Whose lofty towers defiance wav'd
To each invading foe.

"Around his num'rous vast domains
Extended widely lay,
For half of spacious Cumberland
Confess'd his mighty sway.

"Tho' far around his manors spread,
Tho' hosts his subjects were,
His hospitality excell'd
His opulence by far.

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* Hugh de Morville, one of those who assisted in the assassination of Becket, at Canterbury; his residence was chiefly at a castle at Brough, or Burgh, five miles west of Carlisle, where yet remains an entire tower; it is of the same form so commonly found in the North of England and many parts of Scotland, *i. e.* quadrangular. At present it constitutes the steeple

"With my indulgent patron here
Right courteously I far'd,
And in the pleasures of the place
An ample portion shar'd.

"Each kindly striving to remove
The pressure of my thought,
Whilst every new successive day
New entertainment brought.

"Sometimes along the spacious marsh
We chas'd the nimble deer,
Or else in angling spent the day,
On Eden's waters clear.

"Or sometimes with the baying hounds,
The neighb'ring woods explore,
And from the shelt'ring thicket drive
The fierce and bristly boar.

"Thus, whilst at Brough, each coming day
Br ught scenes of fresh delight,
And balls, and various modes of mirth,
Concurr'd to cheer the night.

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of the parish-church of that place. This castle had, probably, been destroyed when the Scots, under the command of Robert Bruce, made their incursion into Cumberland, A. R. 16th Ed. II. 1323 or 4.

" By these my wonted gloom appear'd
To be dispell'd apace,
And gay hilarity and mirth
Establish'd in its place.

" I now had reach'd my eighteenth year,
And was by all confest
To be of an engaging mein,
And person too, possess'd.

" But, conscious of my birth obscure,
My views had stinted scope,
And timid diffidence repell'd
The very hand of hope.

" It chanc'd one night the gay Sir Guy
An entèrtainment made,
For our amusement, which compris'd
A ball and masquerade.

" Full many a Lord and Lady came,
In gallant garb and gay,
Nor could Carnarvon's* court then boast
Of splendor more display.

* The surname of Edward II. so called from being born in Carnarvon Castle, in Wales.

" Their blithest airs the minstrels play'd,
The vaulted roofs resound
With mirthful measures thro' the hall:
The dancers shift around.

"The laugh, the song, their heartfelt joy,
Full easy might betray,
Nor discontinued were those sports
Until the dawn of day.

" Amongst the ladies that were there,
Was one of graceful mein,
Her noble stature and her air
Might well have grac'd a queen.

" Tho' love, as yet, had never play'd
Around my youthful heart,
Yet now, I made myself assured,
I felt its poignant dart.

" The more I danc'd, the more I talk'd,
With this engaging dame,
The more convinc'd was I my breast
Had caught the furious flame.

" With dancing tir'd, and warm with wine,
I press'd the lovely fair
Awhile to leave the busy train,
And breathe the open air.

" All yielding to my utmost wish,
She left the jocund throng,
And thro' the garden's fragrant walks
Well pleas'd we stroll'd along.

" At length we reach'd a secret bow'r,
Amid the thick'ning grove,
Where we indulg'd in each excess
Of fond, but lawless love.

" With strange emotions back I led
My charmer to the Hall,
And with the jovial groupe resum'd
The pastimes of the ball.

" But, what confusion in my face
Must ev'ry eye have known,
Had not my mask conceal'd the blush
Which conscience would have shown!

" At length the rosy tinge of morn
Illum'd the mountains' heads,
The weary wantons quit their sports,
And, yawning, seek their beds:

" I to my wonted chamber went,
But here I found no rest;
The mingled pangs of guilt and love
So occupied my breast.

" Long e'er the castle-bell had rung,
My pillow I forsook;
And to the arbour in the grove
A wistless saunter took.

" In contemplation wrapp'd profound,
My hapless fate I mourn'd;
Whilst in my heart the torch of love
With fiercer ardour burn'd.

" Should she, the object of my love,
Once come to know my state,
Full well I knew that all my hopes
In her must terminate.

" My face, assisted by my mask,
I carefully conceal'd,
Certain, with shame, t' have been repuls'd,
If that had been reveal'd.

" But then, the cause that favour'd me
Now added to my woe;
It hinder'd me from knowing her,
Whom most I wish'd to know.

" Back to the castle I repair'd,
And enter'd by the hall;
The company at breakfast sat;
I look'd—I notic'd all.

" But all in vain inquiry prov'd,
Or passion made me blind,
For her the most for whom I sought,
Her no where could I find.

" But now the cruel fatal time
For our departure come;
It follow'd, that I must of course
Attend Sir Michael home.

" With doleful heart, and downcast eye,
I left the place behind,
Whilst burning love and black despair
United in my mind.

" No lover, e'er before, thought I,
Thus cruelly was cross'd;
To find a treasure, and the same,
In finding, to be lost.

" For her in secret long I pin'd,
And search as useless made,
Till time, that conquers ev'ry ill,
That too, at length, allay'd.

" Tho' ocean into mountains rise,
When tortur'd by the wind,
In time the conflict will subside—
So fares it with the mind.

"Sir Michael's kindness to my cares,
The best of balsams prov'd,
And time compell'd me to forget
That ever I had lov'd.

"Full sixteen years I calmly pass'd
In philosophic joy,
Nor e'er one incident occurr'd
That quiet to annoy.

"Not but a thought of former times,
Would sometimes fill my head;
But, like a recollected dream,
Soon these ideas fled.

"About this time, to Lowther Hall.*
By old Sir Michael sent,
All gaily mounted and array'd,
With lightsome heart I went.

"Thro' Inglewood my journey lay,
A forest long and drear,
But, clad in armour cap-a-pee,
My bosom felt no fear.

* Lowther Hall, in Westmoreland, the seat of the Right Honourable the Earl of Lonsdale.

" But e'er I had proceeded far
Along the lonely course,
Four villains from a thicket rush'd,
And dragg'd me from my horse.

" Resistance little could avail,
All courage was in vain,
They robb'd and stript me of my clothes,
And left me in the lane.

" Unaided thus, and closely bound,
Sore bruis'd—in sad dismay,
Expos'd amid the winter's storm,
Beneath a hedge I lay.

" When Providence, whose guardian eye
Still watches our distress,
Sent Launcelot, of Eden side,
My suff'rings to redress.

" Assisted by his faithful train,
He rais'd me from the ground,
And, with officious kindly care,
Tied up each bleeding wound.

" Then raising me, all deadly pale,
They plac'd me on a steed,
And Armthwaite Castle* being near,
There carried me with speed.

* Armthwaite Castle, the seat of the late G. H. Melbourne, Esq.

" Here such attention was employ'd,
Essential to my case,
That long I linger'd not; their care
Recover'd me apace.

" Yet, tho' their kindest efforts serv'd
My rankling pains to heal,
Rescued from those, I was but doom'd
Severer pains to feel.

" Within the castle liv'd a maid,
Unknown to public fame,
With every female beauty blest,
And Bertha was her name.

" Yet doubtful was the maid's descent,
Her lineage so unknown,
That of her kindred no one knew,
Unless the knight alone.

" I saw fair Bertha, and the sight
Prov'd fatal to my rest;
I lov'd—nor by each effort tried
That love could be suppress'd.

" I saw, I lov'd, nor ought could sooth
The fever of my soul;
Nor time, nor distance, nor resolve,
The passion could controul.

" With time, that conquers common cares,
I found the flame increase,
And absence render'd more acute
The pain 'twas meant to ease.

" With ardent suit I woo'd the fair,
I won her virgin heart;
She soon confess'd her bosom bore,
With mine, an equal part.

" What joy the declaration gave,
No language can define,
And lovers only can conceive
The transports that were mine.

" Sir Launcelot I next address'd,
And each persuasion tried,
For his permission to espouse
Fair Bertha as my bride.

" With answers quite equivocal,
The knight my suit amus'd,
Nor ever plainly gave consent,
Nor perfectly refus'd.

" Tir'd with evasion—fir'd with love,
I press'd the lovely fair
To leave the castle, and with me
One common fortune share.

" The yielding maid approv'd the plan,
And in the silent night,
To an adjacent church, unseen,
We took our lonely flight.

" The rev'rend father of the place
Soon tied the Gordian knot;
And now I deem'd fair Bertha mine.
All happiness my lot.

" Next day the convent we forsook,
And, furnish'd with a guide,
To my kind foster-father's hall
I led my blushing bride.

" The good old man approv'd my choice,
But blam'd the rash event,
Yet promis'd speedily to gain
Sir Launcelot's consent.

" But now 'twas needful to proceed
On some new mode of life;
Besides myself, I had to care
For a deserving wife.

" Nor stopp'd Sir Michael's kindness here,
In friendship ever warm;
For, with a father's care, for me
He stock'd a neighb'ring farm!

" To husbandry accustom'd, I
Each labour could pursue,
And, tho' but young, fair Bertha, she
The arts of dairy knew.

" Here, happy as the tuneful lark,
Three joyous years I pass'd,
Without one intervening care
My happiness to blast.

" Man's chiefest blessing, cheerful health,
In exercise I found;
And, heav'n propitious, with success
My various labours crown'd.

" Amidst fatigue, my Bertha's smiles,
The tedious hours beguil'd;
And, ere our second year was pass'd,
She blest me with a child.

" My happiness was now increas'd,
Full lovely was the boy;
Our equal cares the infant shar'd,
Bestowing equal joy.

THE HERMIT'S TALE

CONTINUED.

CANTO III.

" BUT, ah! how transient, and how vain
Is ev'ry human hope!
The real pleasures of this life
Have but a little scope.

" Uncertain of his future fate,
Man does but little know;
Nor fears misfortune mid success,
Till fate extends the blows.

" So 'twas with me; the morn of life,
Unclouded, gaily pass'd,
The genial outset made me hope
It might for ever last.

" Plac'd, as I thought, upon the top
Of Fortune's giddy wheel,
I soon was destin'd by just heav'n
A sad reverse to feel.

" It chanc'd upon a holiday,
By household business sent,
With cheerful and unheeding heart,
To fair Carlisle I went:

" When, as I thro' the cloisters pass'd,
Intent upon my way,
I heard a female call aloud,
Who beckon'd me to stay.

" I turn'd aside towards the grate,
That I her will might learn,
But, as she wore the sacred veil,
Her face could not discern.

" I thought I recognis'd the voice,
But could not fancy where,
That languid seem'd ; what I suppos'd,
Th'effect of pious care."

" Draw near," the rev'rend matron said,
" Nor apprehensive be,
I have a question to propose,
Which you must answer me.

" Were you not at De Morville's hall,
Some twenty years ago,
And knew you not a lady there?
Now, tell me, aye or no.

"Like lightning bursting from a cloud,
The question shook my brain :—
I humbly answer'd—"Holy Dame,
Denial were in vain.

"Yes, I was there! O, heav'n! that now
I had it not to say;
The pleasures of that night produc'd
Me many a painful day."

"Now, mark me well," the lady cried,
"As truth I shall report,
Since fallacy, I ween, would ill
With my profession sort.

"'Twas I, with whom that fatal night
You wander'd thro' the grove;
'Twas I, with whom beneath the bow'r,
You held illicit love.

"So intimate as we had been,
So fond the night before,
I make no doubt you were surpris'd
You ne'er beheld me more.

"But when the reasons you shall hear,
That caus'd this conduct strange,
Whate'er were your opinions then,
Must now for others change.

"The noise and tumult of the night
Had so derang'd my head,
A burning fever the next day
Confin'd me to my bed.

"Nor till a month elaps'd, or more,
Had I my health regain'd;
And then, but then, alas! to know
New cause of grief remain'd.

"My health restor'd, from room to room
Impatiently I flew;
Of all I eagerly inquir'd
What had become of you.

"But each research successless prov'd,
Enquiry was the same,
Since none of all our household train
Had ever learnt your name.

"In pensive melancholy wrapp'd
I spent a tedious year;
Nor tidings, during all that time,
Of you could ever hear.

"Worn out, at length, with peevish spleen,
With all the world at strife,
I suddenly resolv'd to change
My dissipated life:

" And the remainder of my days
To dedicate to heav'n,
In hopes, for faults and follies past,
By pray'r to be forgiv'n.

" With this resolve, I left the world,
And sought this sacred place;
And have, I hope, a part obtain'd
Of mercy and of grace.

" Full vicious was my former life,
I own the shameful truth;
Yet penance hath, I hope, expung'd
The errors of my youth.

" Near twenty years within these walls
Of solitude I've dwelt,
But ne'er, in all my former life,
Such real pleasure felt.

" But say, of all this lapse of time,
Where has your dwelling been?
That from that hour I ne'er could see
Whom most I would have seen.

" Since that ill-fated night, at Brough,
How have you led your life?
Have you a family? If so,
Pray tell me who's your wife.

" By accident I saw you pass ;
Your form I thought I knew ;
And, as I long had wish'd, I now
Resolv'd to question you.

" For, though secluded from the world,
Howe'er the fault you blame,
My heart still form'd a vacant wish,
At least to know your name."

" Dear object of each youthful hope,"
Cried I, " what would avail
The recollection of those woes,
Reviving in the tale.

" But, since 'tis you that have requir'd
Of me the painful task,
It is but reason I recite
What you've a right to ask.

" Betimes in the subsequent morn
Of that ill-fated night,
I rose, and sought, but sought in vain,
My heart's, my soul's delight.

" I ask'd of ev'ry one I met,
Unknowing whom I sought;
Enquiry quite successless prov'd,
Description serv'd me nought.

"Your face, you well may recollect,
I had not seen before;
Hid by the vizor which that night,
Like all the rest, you wore.

"This, nat'rally, precluded me,
Whatever might ensue,
Or wheresoe'er we chanc'd to meet,
From ever knowing you.

"De Morville and his friendly hall,
In deep disgust I left;
The thoughts of you alone, my soul,
Of ev'ry joy bereft.

"Sunk in despair, a ling'ring year
For you I sigh'd and pin'd;
Whilst night and day your fancied form
Was present to my mind.

"At length the sad conflicting storm
Subsided by degrees;
My mind began to re-assume
Its former wonted ease.

"Amusements now I sought, amidst
The circles of the gay;
In beauty's charms new transports found,
New pleasures in each day.

" At length a female gain'd my heart;
Tho' quite unknown to fame,
Bred with a knight on Eden side,
Fair Bertha was her name.

" Grac'd with each charm that heav'n bestows,
I sought her for my wife;
And now three years with her I've liv'd,
The happiest in my life.

" As for myself, the humble truth
I candidly shall own;
I am a foundling—and, of course,
My family unknown.

" Left with Sir Michael of the Moor,
Fam'd for his courtesy,
And Edmund is the name, they say,
My parents left with me.

" Whilst I my narrative concise,
In humble style pursu'd,
I mark'd strong agitation shook
The lady as she stood;

" Whilst, ill suppress'd, the struggling groan
Did inward grief betray;
But when I came to close the tale,
She shriek'd, and swoon'd away.

" The holy sisterhood, alarm'd,
To her assistance run,
And from the earth, with kindly care,
They rais'd the fainting nun.

" All motionless awhile she lay,
As in the arms of death ;
Till kind restoratives applied,
Recall'd the fleeting breath.

" Thus, life recov'ring, to the train
She said—" My friends, retire ;
Since with this man an interview
In secret I require.

" It is essential to the peace
Of my departing soul,
Which heav'n now calls, nor fate itself
The summons can controul.

" The holy father abbot, he
Our conf'rence shall attend,
For I've important things to speak,
Ere I shall make an end."

" So said, to their respective cells
The female choir withdrew,
Whilst I was introduc'd, those seats
Of solitude to view.

"A man with venerable mein,
The holy abbot, came,
And both of us our stations took,
Attendant on the dame.

"Upon a lowly couch she lay,
Her face all pale and wan,
And gently raising up her head,
Thus, falt'ring, she began:—"

"Good father, oft my youthful crimes
I have confess'd to you,
But the amount of half my guilt,
Till now I never knew.

"Unprecedented are my sins,
And of that damning kind,
That scarce a hope with me remains
That I should mercy find.

"Thou, Edmund, first of all my crimes,
With thee my guilt begun;—
Nay, be not weak, but hear me out,
To know thou art my son!

"Thy sire King Edward was, the First,
A prince of high renown,
To him I bore thee, in my youth,
Before he bore his crown!

"When born I sent thee to be laid
Before Sir Michael's gate,
But, as the servant ne'er return'd,
I never learnt thy fate.

"For twenty more successive years,
My life I lewdly spent,
Nor e'er of reformation thought,
On pleasure solely bent.

"But, ah! that night, that fatal night,
All my offences crown'd;
The just reward of guilty lust
In pregnancy I found.

"Asham'd—for even vice has shame,
When it affects our pride,
I meant, by sending off the babe,
My infamy to hide.

"With old Sir Launcelot she liv'd,
Brought up in rural life,
Her name was Bertha; and, my son,
That daughter is thy wife!

"Thy wife, thy sister, and thy child,
All three combin'd in one;
A double incest!——Guiltless thou—
That guilt is mine alone."

"As when from some uncommon dream
Of horror and affright,
A person chances to awake,
Amid the gloom of night;

"The dreadful recollected scenes
So frighten'd fancy shake,
That for awhile the dreamer doubts
If yet he be awake;

"So 'twas with me—the wond'rous tale
Which I but just had heard,
Seem'd so replete with horrid facts
So full of guilt appear'd;

"That for awhile th' eventful whole,
I wist not what to deem,
But hop'd this revelation strange
Might only prove a dream.

"But when the frightful narrative
I ventur'd to review,
From every fact I felt convinc'd
The whole was but too true.

"Strange palpitations shook my heart,
My brain seem'd whirling round;
And of reflection quite bereft,
I sunk upon the ground.

" Suspended life the abbot's care
Soon kindly did restore;
And when I rose, 'twas but to learn
My mother was no more.

" Stung with the anguish I endur'd,
And all th'eventful past;
Imploring mercy from above,
She sadly breath'd her last!

" Tears, and the pow'r of utt'rance came
At length to my relief,
And loud around the convent walls
Re-echo'd with my grief.

" The kind superior of the place,
Affected by my woe,
By easy soft persuasion strove
Sweet comfort to bestow.

" At length the torrent of distress
Subsided by degrees;
And slow the mind began t' assume
A sort of stupid ease.

" When thus, I cried, there yet remains
The hope to be forgiv'n,
Or how shall I acquitted stand
Before the throne of heav'n?"

"Labour, my son," the abbot cried,
"To lighten your distress;
Tho' great eternal justice be,
Still, mercy is no less.

"Yourself, unconscious of the crime,
No wilful guilt was yours,
And pray'r and penance, when unfeign'd,
Forgiv'ness still secures.

"Then cease unnecessary grief,
Attend the word of truth,
And let amended age atone
The follies of thy youth."

"But tell me, rev'rend sire," said I,
"What was that mother's name,
To whom I owe my being, and
To whom I owe my shame?

"Of her but little have I known,
Yet was that knowledge such,
That little, little as it was,
Was far, by far too much."

"Thy mother," quoth the courteous priest,
"As fitly should be known,
Sir Guy de Morville's sister was,
A knight of high renown.

" In Inglewood the baron he
A hunting went of late,
But being tumbled from his horse,
Met an untimely fate.

" And as the knight intestate died,
Your mother, Lady Jane,
Succeeded, by her legal right,
To all the vast domain.

" Of all the charters, deeds, and rights,
I solely am possess'd,
And now to you the whole resign,
Such was her last request.

" For this her last injunction was,
In solemn charge to me;
And these her last and dying words—
My heir let Edmund be!"

" Sick as I was of all the world,
And stupid with my woe;
Of what avail was wealth to me,
What joy could wealth bestow?

" I left the writings in his hands,
With bonds upon record;
That, if the barony I claim'd,
The whole should be restor'd

" My mother's fun'ral being o'er,
I bad the choir adieu;
And homeward hied with heavy heart,
My anguish to renew.

" My trouble yet was to be told
My poor, my guiltless wife;
And how must I perform the task,
Who lov'd her as my life?

" And yet the task must be perform'd,
Such seem'd the will of heav'n;
Or how could I my num'rous crimes
Expect to have forgiv'n.

" At length I reach'd my once-lov'd cot,
The scene of soft delight,
But now, alas! how sadly chang'd!
How dreadful to my sight!

" Unus'd to be deserted thus,
My Bertha chid my stay,
And told how fearful she had been
At this my long delay.

" What could I do? It must be done—
The dreadful tale I told:
I saw my Bertha's face grow pale,
I felt her hand grow cold!

" The dire intelligence seem'd more
Than nature could sustain ;
She wistful gaz'd me in the face,
But ne'er replied again.

" Her tongue all utt'rance had forsook,
Her tears refus'd to flow ;
And down she sank upon her couch,
Convuls'd in speechless woe !

" A burning fever on the morn
Confin'd her to her bed ;
And one short melancholy week
Beheld her with the dead !

" The grave of Bertha I bedew'd
With many a bitter tear ;
But still the hand of destiny,
All cruel, stopp'd not here :

" For, whilst attendant on her corpse,
I saw her to her tomb,
A band of fierce freebooters had
Been pillaging my home.

" Lifeless, and welt'ring in his gore,
My trusty servant lay ;
My child—my last remaining hope,
The slaves had borne away !

"Quite madden'd with my griefs, I curs'd
The hour that gave me breath,
And nothing sought from heav'n so much
As for immediate death.

"Tho' yet but in the prime of life,
Life seem'd t' engage no more;
I'd lost that heartfelt happiness
Time never could restore.

"So in the busy walks of men,
Resolv'd no more to dwell,
I left my house, and lonely sought
The solitary cell.

"Here seventeen lonely years I've pass'd,
In penitence and pray'r;
And to alleviate others' wants
Hath ever been my care.

"To read the lesson of my life
Unto a listening few,
That, from example, they might learn
Such mischiefs to eschew.

CANTO IV.

" NOW, fair befall my boding heart,"
The youthful Alfred cried,
" Some secret impulse whispers me
That we must be allied.

" 'Tis just now seventeen years ago,
I've heard Sir Bernard say,
A band of furious ruffians came,
By plunder drawn our way.

" The country round all flew to arms,
Nor any idle stood;
The robbers fled; Sir Bernard he,
With all his train, pursu'd.

" And, ere they cou'd repass the Esk,
O'ertook th' encumber'd foe,
Who fled, and all their booty left,
Nor stood to strike a blow!

" Amongst the rest it was my lot,
On that eventful day,
To be re-taken from the foe,
Amongst their other prey.

"But no one there could aught impart
Of whom or whence I came,
For I was then myself so young,
I scarce could lisp my name.

"Sir Bernard brought me to his hall,
And bred me up with care,
Where I, with his own family,
A father's fondness share."

"What is thy name? (the Hermit cried,)
For now, methinks, I trace—
Some recollected features stand
Depicted in thy face."

"When first Sir Bernard (quoth the youth,)
Inquir'd my infant name,
I lisp'd out Alfred, and since that
Have still retain'd the same.

"Besides, I learn'd that at this time
A mantle green I wore,
With EDMUND and with BERTHA mark'd,
Which yet I keep in store:

"For haply on some future day,
Said I, this may declare,
Thro' some auspicious accident,
Who my sad parents are."

"Come to my arms, (the Hermit cried,)
Now are my wishes won;
Thou art my Alfred!—Gracious heav'n!
Yes, yes—it is my son!

"Mysterious are the ways of fate,
With blind and futile man;
And yet the ways of Providence
Shall he pretend to scan?

"For when I thought in sorrow's course
My life unchang'd had pass'd,
Kind heav'n, in mercy, brings my son
To comfort me at last.

"Yes, yes, my Alfred, with his care
Declining life shall bless;
This moment's pleasure would o'er-pay
An age of past distress.

"But, tell me, Alfred, (Edmund said,)
Who's she that's by thy side?
Her bashful diffidence bespeaks
That she is not thy bride.

"Beware, my son, mistaken love;
Avoid the dang'rous snare,
And from a father's lesson learn
His sorrows to beware."

The lovely Imogene she blush'd,
Confusion ting'd her cheek,
But, bound in bashfulness, the maid
Presum'd not now to speak.

When Alfred thus the rev'rend sage,
Ingenuously address'd:
" Dear sire, no foul impressions need
Be harbour'd in your breast.

" For, though in life's precarious ways,
An inexperienc'd youth,
Yet what I've hitherto advanc'd
Is nothing but the truth.

" This lady you behold with me
Is virtuous as she's fair,
And daughter to Sir Bernard is—
In fact his only heir.

" I told you she was forc'd away
By that unfeeling band,
And that I rescu'd and restor'd
Her by my single hand.

" All this is true, that I've declar'd,
For falsehood I despise;
Till now a parent I ne'er knew,
Then what should I disguise.

" Fair Imogene, 'tis true, I love,
Nor has the lovely dame
Regardless notic'd my concern,
But felt a mutual flame.

" Tho' conscious of my state obscure,
My flame I long conceal'd,
Nor till her kind approval gain'd,
That passion e'er reveal'd.

" Child of obscurity and want,
What madness should I prove,
Had I a declaration made
Of my ambitious love.

" But now a ray of brighter hope
Pervades my humble mind,
And fairer prospects crowd to view,
Since I a father find."

With this avowal of his love,
Ingenuous, as I ween,
A deeper dye suffus'd the cheek
Of lovely Imogene.

For, tho' unconscious of the flame
That prey'd on Alfred's heart,
Her breast reciprocal had felt
For him an equal smart.

Thus either lover long had liv'd,
 Though equally unknown;
And, but for accident, that love
 They neither would have shown.

In him 'twas diffidence alone,
 That could the flame conceal;
Whilst modesty in her forbad
 The passion to reveal.

" But say, my son, (the hermit cried,)
 With all thy smother'd love,
Hast thou a hope Sir Bernard's heir
 That passion can approve?

" A blush diffuses o'er her cheek,
 That more bespeaks her heart
Than all the specious figures us'd
 In elocution's art.

" Say, Imogene, if Alfred were
 Thine equal in estate,
Could'st thou, with good Sir Bernard's leave,
 Consent to be his mate?"

Confusion chok'd the beauteous maid,
 She falter'd to reply;
She lov'd young Alfred far too well
 Her passion to deny.

And yet, by modesty withheld,
She scrupled to avow
That love, she knew not how to hide,
Which show'd most obvious now.

" A happy omen, (Edmund cried,)
As happy prove th' event !
Thy speechless answer almost proves
That silence gives consent."

" If I must speak, (the maid replied,)
And truth be forc'd to say,
Your son has not unpleasing been,
To me, this many a day.

" But, little did I e'er suppose
That thus his gen'rous heart,
When mine was tortur'd with distress,
Endur'd an equal smart."

" All-gracious heav'n ! (the youth exclaim'd,)
What happiness is this !
Sure mortals are not oft decreed
To share an equal bliss.

" Which most my admiration claims ?
Which most should I approve ?
In this I meet paternal care,
In that requited love !"

" No more, my son, (old Edmund said,)
Thy transports now suspend,
The night is far advanc'd, and claims
That we the subject end.

" The thing most needful, in my mind,
Till morning I'll revolve;
And by that time expect to hear
My purpose and resolve."

The rosy-finger'd queen of morn,
Had ting'd the eastern skies,
Ere Morpheus had remov'd his seals
From Alfred's drowsy eyes.

All glitt'ring on the craggy cliff,
The sun refulgent gleams,
Whilst winding Eden, from below,
Reflects the quiv'ring beams.

When Edmund hied him to the couch
Where Alfred slumb'ring lay,
And rous'd him from his deathlike sleep
To hail the happy day.

Then to the bow'r, where sweetly slept
Fair Imogene, he goes,
And, with a soft salute, awakes
The maid from her repose.

Full gaily smil'd the blushing rose,
Full gaily bloom'd the thorn,
But gayer still bloom'd Imogene,
Upon this happy morn.

The new-born hopes, the pleasing thoughts,
That throng'd her lovely breast,
Improv'd each charm, and in her eyes
That secret joy confess'd.

Whilst Alfred, more than doubly bless'd,
Her rising charms survey'd,
With all the extacy of love,
By mutual love repaid.

This common joy the sage himself
Seem'd partially to share;
And, by the present won, awhile
Forgets his former care.

Up to the summit of the cliff,
The youthful pair he led;
When, far extended to the view,
The spacious landscape spread.

Northward, in azure mists involv'd,
The Scotian mountains rise;
And southward, Cumbria's fertile plains
Salute the gladden'd eyes.

Here, to the east, thro' fruitful vales,
The Eden winds its way;
There, to the west, proud Solway rolls
Impetuous to the sea.

Here you may view the sweeping bark,
Swift gliding o'er the main;
And there unnumber'd flocks behold,
That graze upon the plain.

Whilst to the left, thy lofty tow'rs,
Caerlulia,* may be seen;
And to the right, in humble style,
The far-fam'd Gretna-Green.

Behold where yon embattled tow'rs
Majestically rise,
Whose lofty pinnacles appear
Envelop'd with the skies;

That noble structure once confess'd
De Morville for its Lord,
And round him num'rous vassals liv'd,
Attendant on his word.

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* Caerlulia, the old British name of Caerlisle, from Caer, a city, and Lule, or Leol, a wall being situated near the Picts' wall.

" Each, by my mother's will, to me
The same obedience yields ;
These castles and these tow'rs are mine,
These forests and these fields.

" But sicken'd (said the good old man)
With sorrow, as I've been,
What charms had affluence left for me,
Who nought but woe had seen ?

" Disgusted with the busy world,
Its follies and its strife,
I sought for solitude; resolv'd
With heav'n to pass my life.

" The abbot of St. Mary's, he
Has had, since that event,
Of all my temporal concerns
The perfect management.

" But, since, my lov'd, my long-lost child,
My life revives in thee,
Our worldy business must, henceforth,
Entirely alter'd be.

" Those castles, and those wide domains,
So bootlessly made mine,
On marrying lovely Imogene,
To thee I shall resign !

"I make no doubt I soon shall gain
Sir Bernard's free consent,
For cruelty it must be deem'd,'
Your union to prevent.

"What tho' if she an heiress be,
And he a baron brave,
Thy portion shall be three times more
Than all that he can have.

"Th' extensive barony at Brough
Is all at thy command,
With large domains in diff'rent parts
Of spacious Cumberland.

"Where yon fair column proudly braves
Th'insulting northern blast,
Thy royal grandsire Edward,* he
Inglorious breath'd his last.

---

* Edward the First died in his camp, of a dysentery, on a spacious plain, commonly called the Marsh, near Brough, on the sands, as he was on his expedition to the invasion of Scotland. Soon after his death, a monumen of wood had been erected to his memory, but this yielding to the ravage of all-destroying time, about the latter end of the seventeenth century a fair column of free-stone was erected by his Grace the Duke of Norfolk, on the place where the former one had stood, with an inscription indicative of the character, the cause of the expedition, and the manner and time of the death of that illustrious monarch: this, happening to be built on an unstable foundation, towards the close of the eighteenth century fell down also. Since that, it has been rebuilt at the sole expense of the present earl of Lonsdale.

"Encamp'd upon that plain, he died—
Destruction his design;
Ambition mark'd his life. My son,
Let virtue temper thine.

"And now, my children, to Carlisle,
With speed let us repair,
The father abbot shall assist
In what is wanting there.

"From thence the good Sir Bernard may
With ease be advertis'd;
And, of our coming and design,
Be properly appris'd.

"For now 'tis my most ardent wish
Your nuptials soon to see,
Which I propose, ere I return,
There solemniz'd shall be."

Then to their route, with joyous hearts.
Set out the happy train,
Along the river's verdant side,
And soon the abbey gain.

A courier soon Sir Bernard brought,
Who came, well pleas'd, to learn
That Imogene had rescu'd been,
And was on her return.

Nor had the fair occasion long
    To sue for his consent,
Sir Bernard was too fond by far,
    Their union to prevent.

Rejoic'd, he gave his Imogene
    To be young Alfred's bride;
And, by the rev'rend abbot, soon
    The Gordian knot was tied.

Next morning to De Morville's hall
    The party took their way;
Nor e'er had Brough beheld before,
    A scene so grand—so gay.

Rejoicings for a month at least,
    On this occasion were;
And at their table rich and poor
    Most lib'rally did share.

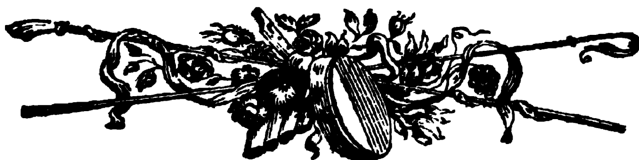
The sports concluded, and the guests
    Sped each his diff'rent way;
Kind Alfred sorely importun'd
    His hapless sire to stay:

But all entreaties were in vain,
    Tho' each his utmost tried,
To tempt the solitary sire
    With Alfred to reside.

Tenacious of his lonely life,
He sought his humble cell,
Resolv'd (as he to Heav'n had vow'd,)
In solitude to dwell.

But, as the distance was but small,
He now and then would stray
To Brough, and, with his children there,
Enjoy a happy day.

While Alfred and his Imogene,
With ev'ry comfort crown'd;
Liv'd long—were happy, and esteem'd
By all the country round.



THE

ROSE OF CORBY.

SWEET sung the blackbird on the spray,
Sweet sung the lark his matin song;
And sweetly sung sweet Ellen gay,
As thro' the grove she rang'd along.
Fair Ellen was pronounc'd the rose
Of all the maidens far and wide;
No rival beauty might propose,
To vie with her, on Eden side.
Her sire Sir Gilferd Salkeld was,
A doughty baron as might be,
No neighbouring knight could him surpass,
In wealth, throughout the north country.
Nor more for wealth than valour fam'd,
His prowess rang the country round;
The brave Sir Gilferd still surnam'd,
For e'en at court was he renown'd.
Fair Ellen was his only child,
Now in her prime, with ev'ry grace;
In manners, as an angel mild,
Whilst beauty's self sat in her face.

Full many a knight of high renown,
And baron bold with ardour strove
To win the fair one for his own,
And to engage young Ellen's love.
Amongst the undistinguish'd crowd
Of suitors that successive came,
Was one, a knight, right brave allow'd,
Sir Fergus Bewick was his name:
Great was his wealth, great was his pow'r,
In Bew his castled mansion lay,
And day by day within his tow'r,
Full fourscore men enjoy'd his pay.
With ardour long his suit he press'd,
Implor'd her pity, urg'd his smart;
But tho' keen passion fir'd his breast,
No flame responsive warm'd her heart.
Thus unsuccessful with the dame,
The sire's assistance next he sues;
To him propos'd his suit and aim,
In hopes the boon he'd not refuse;
But sordid was Sir Gilferd's breast,
Still wishful to increase his store;
And, tho' with more than plenty bless'd,
Yet, still the baron wanted more!
Lord Dacres had his love disclos'd,
Not to fair Ellen, but her sire;
To him large offers had propos'd,
In hopes to accomplish his desire.

Their wide domains contiguous laid,
  Lord Dacres was of high degree,
And where one acre Bewick had,
  It might be said that he had three:
This with old Salkeld more prevail'd,
  Than ev'ry argument beside.
The suit of poor Sir Fergus fail'd,
  And Ellen's hand he was denied;
But in his heart no rankling wound
  His unrequited love had made:
There love had little entrance found,
  And soon that little was allay'd.
To Corby castle more attach'd,
  Than to fair Ellen by his flame,
He to her fortunes would have match'd,
  Not minding much the beauteous dame.
And much the same Lord Dacres, he
  The lands, and not the lady, view'd.
Nor caring how her heart might be,
  He diligent the father sued.
Of Corby castle once possess'd,
  He well foresaw his rising worth,
For this would make him, with the rest,
  The greatest lord in all the North.
Nor was the sire less pleas'd to see
  Th' increase of wealth, th' increase of pow'r;
That, from this sordid union he
  Should on his much-lov'd daughter show'r.

Sir Gilferd to his daughter said,
Upon a lovely morn in May,
" Come here, my fair, my pretty maid,
I something serious have to say :
You're now near twenty years of age,
And in the bloom of youthful prime,
'Tis meet you with the world engage,
Nor longer idly waste your time ;
For I am old, and far in years,
My thread of life cannot last long ;
And many are a father's fears,
That a dear daughter may do wrong.
Then, ere I sink into the grave,
As heaven alone can tell how soon,
Of you one favour I must crave,
And you must not deny the boon.—
You know I've been indulgent still,
To you no wish have I denied,
For whate'er seem'd to be your will,
With that was I well satisfied.
So, daughter dear, with my request,
In gratitude, you must comply,
Obedience always makes me blest,
I know you cannot—won't deny.
Lord Dacres is a worthy lord,
He likes you well, he craves your love;
I promis'd, on a father's word,
His suit my Ellen must approve.

His vast domains wide round us lies,
To yours this added soon shall be;
And you, advanc'd in rank, shall rise
Prime lady of the North country.
But, if perversely you refuse
To yield consent to my request;
Know, 'tis notl eft to you to choose;
No, 'tis your father's firm behest!
But, fain that tyrant word—command,
Would I excuse, might it be so;
Nor forth extend coercion's hand,
To plunge a daughter into woe;
But your good sense, my child, I hope.
Will teach obedience to my will,
Nor let you with my mandate cope;
So trust I to your better skill.
If you Lord Dacre's suit approve,
Then all I have is surely thine;
But if you shall refuse your love,
Then ne'er expect a mite of mine;
This is my pleasure, my request—
Nay, more—'tis my command to you;
Think as you please, but choose the best:"—
So spoke the baron, and withdrew.
Have you beheld a new-blown rose,
When drench'd by one fast-falling shower;
Its tints with more effect disclose,
Each drop improving more the flower?

So look'd fair Ellen, pensive, mute,
The tears fast trickling o'er her cheek:
To hear Lord Dacre's proxied suit,
Unable one short word to speak.
How could she force her heart to love
One scarcely seen, and quite unknown;
How force her bosom to approve
A flame repugnant to her own?
No! 'tis not in a parent's might,
To force affection—fix the heart;
A subtler pow'r, with subtler slight,
Alone can execute this part.
Amongst the knights and barons who
So frequent throng'd Sir Gilbert's court.
For feats of tournaments or show,
To hunt the boar, or other sport;
Tho' in their gaudiest suits array'd,
Tho' num'rous vassals throng'd each train
Tho' skill and valour were display'd,
And courtesy of manners vain;
Not one, 'midst all this proud parade,
Of lordly guests who forward press'd,
Had e'e the least impression made
Within fair Ellen's youthful breast;
Save one:—a youth, whose modest mein
Spoke no exalted rank or fame;
Him oft at Corby had she seen,
And Musgrave was the stripling's name.

No baron he, nor baron's son,
Nor garter'd knight of high degree,
But he with Lord De Graystock won,
In his fair castle merrily.
Adorn'd with ev'ry courtly grace,
Each rare endowment he possess'd;
A manly beauty flush'd his face,
And virtue seem'd to fire his breast.
His grandsire, whilom the domain
Erst held of Gilsland, as I ween,
But our sixth Harry's hapless reign
The ruin of his house had been;
A small reversion had been spar'd,
Whereby the family to trace,
Of which Lord Graystock then was ward
For Musgrave, last of all his race.
In him, as in the fondest sire,
The youth a kind protection found,
And ev'ry wish, and each desire,
Were always with indulgence crown'd.
A train of serving-men had he,
Alone to serve at his command;
And where his lord e'er chanc'd to be,
Was Musgrave close at his right hand.
Whenc'er to old Sir Gilferd's hall
De Graystock friendly visits paid,
The younker, let what would befal,
One of his party always made.

Young Ellen saw—young Ellen lov'd,
  The youth alone her heart possess'd;
His ev'ry action she approv'd,
  And that approval soon confess'd.
Nor unconcern'd had he beheld
  The youthful Ellen's beauteous face,
A mutual flame his breast had fill'd,
  And ev'ry thought to love gave place;
But, conscious of th' inferior state
  In which he stood, he only mourn'd;
Bewail'd th' unkindness of his fate,
  In silence gaz'd—in secret burn'd.
Full oft, to ease his love-lorn mind,
  An interview he sought to have;
And love, to lovers ever kind,
  An opportunity soon gave:
For, as one morn amidst the shade
  He rang'd, deep wrapp'd in thoughtful love,
He chanc'd to hear the beauteous maid,
  Sweet singing thro' the echoing grove.
With ardour wing'd, swift as a dart
  Th' impatient lover onward hied;
But love, tho' it o'erflow'd the heart,
  The pow'rs of utt'rance quite denied.
Awhile in fix'd amazement stood
  Th' admiring youth, nor vent'rous spoke;
Her charms with heartfelt transport view'd,
  But thus, at length, he silence broke:—

" Say, lady fair, what brings you here,
  So far, so early, and alone?"
Quoth she—" Kind sir, what needs me fear,
  Are not these parks my father's own?
Here, ev'ry morn, I come to hear
  The lark his matin carol sing;
Here, too, at ev'ning tide repair,
  Until the warning curfew ring.
How cheering is the blackbird's song,
  How fresh'ning is the vernal breeze,
How glad seem all the feather'd throng,
  Whilst gaily flutt'ring thro' the trees!
Fair is the landscape to the eye,
  And variegated is the scene;
Hush'd are the winds, whilst yonder sky
  Is all unruffled and serene.
There Eden rolls, majestic stream!
  Whose course the tow'ring cliffs o'ershade,
And there Aurora's morning beam,
  From its smooth surface is display'd.
Yon rising hills, these murm'ring floods,
  Those distant tow'rs that strike the sight;
These flow'ry walks, those shady woods,
  Are all conducive of delight.
And then, how healthful 'tis to range,
  To breathe the morning-scented air?
Why, then, kind stranger, seems it strange,
  That you should find me walking here?"

" Not that I blame your walk, (replies
The youth,) 'tis pleasant, all must own;
But what created my surprise,
Was, but in meeting you alone."
" And who should be my partner, pray,
(Said she) to walk along the grove?"
" What person fitter, lady, say,
Than he, the happy man you love?"
" Who is that man? (fair Ellen said,)
As yet I wot not, I protest!"
" Whoe'er he be, most beauteous maid,
He certes must be doubly bless'd."
Good heavens! young Musgrave sigh'd, then hush'd,
On Ellen fix'd his stedfast eyes;
Whilst o'er his cheeks th' crimson flush'd,
And she beheld him with surprise.
" Why stand you thus, (said Ellen,) speak;
Why fix your earnest gaze on me;
Why heaves your breast—why glows your cheeks;
Say, sir, what may the matter be?"
" Forgive, fair dame, (young Musgrave cried,)
Th' emotions prudence should conceal;
Emotions, which I cannot hide,
That speak too plainly what I feel.
To burn in secret, long my fate,
For thee, sweet Ellen, peerless fair:
But, conscious of my humble state,
Forbore that passion to declare.

But since the long heart-buried flame
  That rent my breast—that made me bleed,
Bursts forth that passion to proclaim,
  Despair to folly must succeed."
"Despair! (fair Ellen strait replied,)
  Brave men with fortune ought to cope;
The adage ne'er was yet denied—
  Faint heart—you know the rest—then hope."
But say, what pencil shall pourtray
  The alter'd look of Musgrave's face?
No common hand the task essay,
  When doubt to certainty gave place.
Soon each to each their hearts explain,
  And diffidence was soon no more;
Nor long suspense prolong'd their pain,
  For love had done the work before.
From Graystock many a well-pleas'd tour,
  To Corby, graceful Musgrave took;
And ofttimes at the midnight hour,
  Leander-like, he swam the brook:
There, with his rose in dalliance sweet,
  He'd stay till grey-ey'd morn appear'd;
Then, unobserv'd, made his retreat,
  And gladsome home to Graystock steer'd.
But when fair Ellen came to know
  Her father's cruel, stern intent,
Her heart was quite o'erwhelm'd with woe,
  And rage and fear her bosom rent.

Rage, that she should be thus compell'd
  To wed the object of her hate;
But most her breast with fears was fill'd,
  Lest Musgrave were inform'd too late.
Th' ensuing morning was to see
  Her made Lord Dacre's married wife!
Such was her father's stern decree,
  And curs'd must be her future life.
And such was old Sir Gilferd's mood,
  No reasoning e'er could change his mind
For, be the project bad or good,
  He'd do what he had once design'd.
His temper well fair Ellen knew,
  From lenity she'd nought to hope:
And sure desertion must ensue,
  Were she to hazard to elope.
But then to give her willing hand
  To one her heart so disapprov'd,
And, for a cruel sire's command,
  Thus to desert the man she lov'd!
O'er each consideration weigh'd,
  But how to act she could not tell;
Nice was the point, and sore afraid
  Was she to err, tho' meaning well.
Then she call'd up her trusty page,
  And to the varlet thus said she—
"Wilt thou now, on thy oath, engage
  To serve me once with secrecy?

An errand thou must run me strait,
  A letter, too, must take withal,
And thou must neither stop nor wait
  Till thou hast reach'd De Graystock's hall."—
Then up and spoke this trusty page,
  And to fair Ellen thus did say:
"In what new task must I engage,
  That you these strict injunctions lay?
Have you not found me faithful still,
  To run or bide at your command;
Has not my pleasure been your will,
  Did I your bidding ever stand?"
"No more, (she said;) begone with speed,
  Nor longer stop to prate—away!
But as I find you shall succeed,
  Proportion'd your reward shall be."
Then off with nimble feet he hied,
  The silver moon bestow'd her light;
Nor stopp'd he once, nor turn'd aside,
  Till Graystock tow'rs appear'd in sight.
And when he reach'd the castle gate,
  He boldly rung the castle bell:
"Who's there! (the porter call'd) that late,
  Thus rings; or what's your business, tell?"
"Unbar the gate, (the page replied,)
  Be quick, for I've no time to stay;"
"For what? (the churlish porter cried,)
  First, stranger, tell thy business, pray."

"'Tis a fair lady's embassage,
That I in charge to Musgrave bear;
And I must see him, (said the page,)
Before the morning light appear."
Then strait the bolts the porter drew;
The page admitted thro' the gate,
And quick to Musgrave's chamber flew,
His sore-grudg'd errand to relate.
The slumb'ring lover from his bed
The porter rous'd, and led him strait
To where the page all shiv'ring staid,
Impatient, at the inner gate.
"What is thy business, (Musgrave said,)
What is thy business, friend, with me;
That thus my slumbers you invade,
'Midst dreams of such felicity?"
"'Tis much (replied the witty page)
If e'er you dreamt, whilst in your bed,
Of things wherein you must engage,
E'er you again lay down your head.
Here is a letter; read it strait,
From that you'll learn what's to be done:
For me, I may no longer wait,
I must be home ere rising sun."
So said the page: with speed return'd;
Whilst Musgrave to his chamber hies;
His breast with keen enquiry burn'd,
And soon the crackling signet flies.

But, as the tender scroll he read,
What anxious passions throng'd his breast—
Love, fear, and rage, by turns invade,
And sorely was the youth distress'd.
But not a moment now to waste
Was left, the time was precious grown;
His servants Musgrave rais'd in haste,
And soon his ticklish plight made known.
" Attend, my gay companions, all,
(The love-lorn anxious Musgrave said,)
I've business now, it seems, will call
For all your friendship and your aid.
The beauteous rose of Corby, she
Has sworn to be my wedded bride,
But her stern father doth decree,
She to Lord Dacres should be tied.
To-morrow is the fated day
That makes fair Ellen Dacres' wife;
Then rouse, my friends, nor ling'ring stay;
On you depends my future life.
Array you in your suits of green,
Each with a sword and target bright;
And let us, ere De Graystock ween,
To Corby scour, ere morning light.
The nearest route full well I know,
No tell-tale shall our march report,
In sooth, our steeds shall not be slow,
We'll either make or mar some sport."

With haste th' ready troop obey'd,
Each from the stall his courser led,
And soon th'advent'rous cavalcade,
Like light'ning, from the castle sped.
Thro' Inglewood they took their way,
O'er lofty Berwick furious ride;
And, long before the break of day,
Arrive at Eden's winding side;
Here, in a close embow'ring wood,
They stopp'd awhile, whilst breath they took,
To fix on plans to be pursu'd,
Before they ventur'd thro' the brook.
" By the Lord Harry, (Musgrave said,)
Now something desp'rate must be done,
For oft said Ellen, beauteous maid!
Faint heart fair lady never won!
But here awhile we may repose,
Till Sol yon eastern hills adorn;
What would be best to do, God knows—
But nought can be achiev'd till morn."
So said, their coursers fast they tied,
And down on heathy hillocks lay,
Resolv'd in silence to abide
The upshot of the coming day.
Forth from th' east the blushing dawn
O'er Hartside's heights now 'gan to glare
The lowing herds now seek the lawn
The shepherds to their pens repair.

Whilst thro' the grove the woodlark sings,
The bleating lambkins range the hills,
And welcome to the chorus rings,
And smiles the face of nature fill.
Up rose Lord Dacres with the day,
Around him throng'd a num'rous train
Of knights, and 'squires, and ladies gay,
Before his castle, on the plain.
For Corby march'd the merry troop,
'Twas heartfelt pleasure flush'd each face;
Nor oft had pass'd so fair a groupe
Thro' Gilsland, on so fair a case.
Sir Fergus Bewick by the side
Of Dacres rode, in cheerful glee,
In armour clad, with lordly pride—
A gallant wight I ween was he.
With numbers more in armour bright,
Who gaily follow'd in the throng;
In sooth, it was a glorious sight
To view them as they pass'd along.
Scarce had the sun the hills illum'd,
That bound fair Cumbria on the east,
Before this troop, all gaily plum'd,
The western banks of Irthing press'd.
Whilst Corby Castle near at hand,
Rose thro' the forest, fair to view,
When, eager now, the jocund band
The nearly-finish'd route pursue.

The tuneful bell with cheerful sound,
From Weath'rhill Pri'ry hail'd the train;
And the re-echoing rocks resound
Down Eden's vale the gladsome strain.
And soon arriv'd the cheerful band,
Their length'ning ranks in order drawn,
In ample lines they gaily stand,
Extended o'er the verdant lawn.
Old Salkeld hobbled to the green,
And said—"My friends, you're welcome all
So fair a troop I have not seen
Assembled e'er before my hall.
How fares Lord Dacres, and the rest
Of all his jovial company?
All well, I hope, so I am bless'd;
Come, friends, dismount—and go with me;
For ere you stir, or quit this ground
For Hymen's altar to proceed,
The sparkling goblet shall go round,
As, doubtless, all refreshment need."
So said—the grooms the prancing steeds
Each led to their respective stall;
Whilst Dacres his companions leads,
To taste the cheer of Gilferd's hall.
Here ev'ry face with joy seem'd glad,
To trouble ev'ry heart unknown;
Save Ellen, silent she, and sad,
Her chamber sought, and sigh'd alone.

"Where is my Musgrave, (cried the maid,)
Why comes he not with speed to me?
Oh! has my secret been betray'd,
Or faithless can my truelove be?
Haste to my rescue, Musgrave, haste;
Or soon I'm made Lord Dacres' wife!
In dole my future days to waste,
And be unhappy thro' my life."
Young Musgrave heard not Ellen's moan,
In the green forest where he stood;
Yet oft his anxious looks were thrown
To Corby, from the shelt'ring wood.
He saw Lord Dacres, with his train,
Arrive upon the castle green;
He saw them muster'd on the plain;—
Full sorely vex'd was he I ween.
For full five hundred glitt'ring spears
With Dacres' came, all fair to view,
Their numbers rais'd the lover's fears,
And well he wist not what to do.
"Here are we but a score in all,
(He said) and tho' we courage boast,
My friends, our number is too small
To cope with such a pow'rful host.
Some fav'ring juncture I expect
Kind heav'n, for Musgrave, shall ordain;
We must by stratagem effect
What we by force cannot obtain.

Expectant of our future state,
 Unseen, their movements we may view;
The happy crisis here await
 That shall instruct us what to do:
Whilst each of you, my trusty friends,
 Attend me, with undaunted heart;
That, when kind chance th' occasion lends,
 Each may be ready for his part."
And now prepare these gallants all,
 Each to remount his mettled steed,
To quit the hospitable hall,
 And to the abbey strait proceed.
Fair Ellen on a palfrey rode
 Full closely by Lord Dacre's side,
In garment gay, dress'd a-la-mode,
 A winsome, but a woeful bride.
Young Musgrave view'd the cavalcade
 From the green forest where he lay,
The host, in glitt'ring arms array'd,
 And (painful sight) his Ellen gay.
But say, how must his youthful heart
 With agonizing rage be torn,
To see his rose in tears depart,
 And to the church triumphant borne!
The temple soon the party gain,
 And soon the hallow'd rites are o'er;
When all soon quit the sacred fane,
 And to the hall return once more.

Loud mirth now fills the festive throng,
  The spacious goblets stream around;
The mingling laugh, the chorus'd song,
  Loud thro' th' echoing mansion sound;
And ev'ry bosom seem'd to share
  The transports of the festive morn,
Save Ellen—she, dejected fair,
  In secret wail'd her lot forlorn;
When loudly rung the castle bell,
  And loudly rung the echoing hall!
For such an unexpected knell
  Struck with surprise the strangers all!
" Who's there? (the testy porter cried,)
  That with such vengeance dares to ring;
'Twere meet his manners he had tried,
  That doth such noisy errands bring."
" I bear a note, (one answer'd strait;)
  'Tis for fair Ellen's hand alone,
And here the lady must I wait,
  Until her answer I have known."
To Ellen swift the porter flies,
  And strait the stranger's message brought;
Quick to the gate the lady flies,
  And from a page receives the note;
With which she to her chamber flew,
  Its contents all in haste to prove;
But how was she surpris'd to view,
  Subscrib'd—" Your Musgrave, in the grove!"

In this he had a plan propos'd,
In which their mutual int'rests shar'd;
A plan with which fair Ellen clos'd,
And strait a feign'd reply prepar'd.
Then to the hall again she hied,
Where all the guests expectant staid:
"What is the news, (her father cried;
What was that note, my pretty maid?"
"'Tis from my charming cousin Kate,
Of Brayton hall; who sends to me,
That, since she's been inform'd so late,
She begs that she excus'd may be:
But promises, some future day,
When all our bustle is got through,
She'll come, and at our castle stay,
And spend with me a week or two."
So said—with her suppos'd reply
Again she hastens to the gate;
The page commands aloud to fly,
And bear her scroll to cousin Kate.
But, at that instant, from the trees,
Brave Musgrave and his trusty train
Rush forth, the trembling Ellen seize,
And bear her, fainting, o'er the plain!
Each to his courser nimbly springs,
Fair Ellen, Musgrave rode behind;
Love, join'd with fear, supplies them wings,
And off they scamper'd like the wind.

O'er Scaleby moor their route they took,
  The Esk they forded one and all;
Nor stopp'd they once for burn nor brook,
  Until they reach'd Gillknockie hall:
Here Johnny Armstrong held his seat,
  Of Cumbrian marches then the pest,
And here they found a safe retreat,
  For here what pow'r could them molest!
The bravest baron of the North
  At Armstrong's name would shake with dread,
For, when he led his legions forth,
  Wide terror round the country spread:
For full four hundred bowmen bold
  He constant kept within his hall,
And had, as we're by story told,
  Both horse and harness for them all.
Now here awhile let Musgrave stay
  In Eskdale, with his Ellen fair;
To Corby we retrace our way,
  And view again what's doing there.—
The porter from the castle-gate
  Had partly seen fair Ellen's rape,
And flew like light'ning to relate
  Her capture, and the foe's escape.
Wild uproar thro' the mansion rang'd,
  That loudly echo'd with alarms;
Their merriment to mourning chang'd,
  And all the place resounds to arms.

"To arms! to arms! (Lord Dacres cried,)
  To horse, my friends, without delay,
For treason stalks—my blooming bride,
  The rose of Corby's snatch'd away!
The fierce freebooters of the North,
  They, doubtless, have my Ellen ta'en;
Then bravely let us sally forth,
  The beauteous captive to regain."
Then northward these, and southward those,
  In sooth they wander'd far and near,
But of the luckless ravish'd Rose
  No tale nor tidings could they hear.
For, tho' the porter saw the train
  That bore the beauteous bride away,
To mark the route that they had ta'en,
  It seems he had no mind to stay.
The band thus foil'd in their pursuit,
  Back to the castle slow return;
There, wrapp'd in stupid silence mute,
  Fair Ellen's luckless fate they mourn.
"'Tis strange, (Sir Fergus Bewick cried,)
  Who those bold ravishers have been,
That could secure the hapless bride,
  And thus escape with her unseen.
'Twould seem as if from concert she
  Had acted with the men before,
For she went to the gate right free,
  Nor her, nor they, have we seen more."

" Now foul befall thee, false Sir knight,
(Lord Dacres to Sir Fergus cried,)
It strikes me now that rival spite
Hath robb'd me of my beauteous bride.
Amaz'd, I thy indiff'rence saw,
Beheld thy coolness with surprise,
That could so easily withdraw
Thy claims from such a precious prize!
Was thy pretended friendship, say,
But meant to cozen me thy friend;
Meant to seduce my bride away,
And leave thee hated in the end?
Think not, Sir Fergus thus to deal
With me as one thou wouldst despise;
Dacres has a heart to feel,
He has a hand that shall chastise.
For whereso'er the charming maid
Thou hast conceal'd, or east or west,
Be sure that this avenging blade
Shall force the secret from thy breast."
When thus Sir Fergus fierce replied—
" Lord Dacres, you have charg'd me wrong;
Such words suit ill a Bewick's pride;
Such charges can't to me belong.
Not one of all the Bewick line
The name of villain ever knew,
Much less shall coward then combine
To stigmatize our honour too!

As heav'n's my judge! I do aver
  I never practis'd on your bride;
Nor basely would with knaves confer,
  Your nuptials thus to set aside.
Know, Dacres, Bewick doth despise
  All falsehood, whatsoe'er its aim,
As much as he thy rage defies,
  Or values his unblemish'd name.
Ere I (believe me on my word)
  To thee in point of honour yield,
I'll place my life upon my sword,
  And try my fortune in the field.
'Tis true I once fair Ellen lov'd;
  But soon relinquish'd ev'ry claim,
Whene'er I knew that disapprov'd
  Were my addresses by the dame.
Can'st thou, Lord Dacres, then suppose
  That I could brook such villainy,
To rob thee of thy rightful Rose,
  By practices so cowardly?
Ill suits it with our house's pride,
  To be thus slander'd and aspers'd;
Our honour has been often tried,
  Nor was our courage thought the worse.
Then think not, Dacres, I shall stand
  And tamely bear a villain's name;
With thee I'll try my willing hand,
  And vindicate my injur'd fame."

No more they chaff'd with useless words,
But from the hall, enrag'd, withdrew;
Refulgent flash'd their deadly swords,
And each to each like lions flew!
Sir Fergus aim'd a deadly thrust
At Dacres' breast—he reel'd—and fell.
Writhing with pain, he bites the dust,
And, cursing, takes his last farewell.
But, ere the dire vindictive wound
Of life that Dacres dispossess'd,
His faulchion had a passage found
Deep in the brave Sir Bewick's breast!
Fast thro' the wound life's purple tide
Rush'd forth, whilst Fergus gasp'd for breath;
"I'm innocent!" (he falt'ring cried,)
Then clos'd his glimm'ring eyes in death.
With gen'ral consternation shook,
Each knight and baron stood oppress'd;
Wild horror star'd in ev'ry look,
And anger rose in ev'ry breast.
When thus Sir Gilferd Salkeld said
Unto the strangers in his hall—
"'Tis I that have this ruin made,
'Tis I am guilty of it all.
The fault, the folly, mine are prov'd,
The damning thought shall haunt me still;
By av'rice and ambition mov'd,
I thought to force my daughter's will.

But, punish'd in my boundless pride,
  Whilst I that folly long may mourn,
Fate all those prospects has denied,
  And she, my Rose, shall ne'er return.
O Destiny! my child restore,
  Her presence yet may soothe my pain,
Grant me but her, I ask no more,
  And all that's mine is her's again."
So pray'd the parent in his grief,
  And heav'n, indulgent, heard his pray'r;
For soon the porter brought relief—
  A letter from his Ellen fair:
In this for pardon much she sued,
  Then pleaded in her own defence;
The tears the father's cheeks bedew'd,
  As he exclaim'd—"Just Providence!
How wise and wond'rous are thy ways,
  Omniscient justice! Pow'r divine!
Man may a thousand projects raise —
  To execute, alone is thine.
Yes, Musgrave, thou shalt be my son;
  My Ellen shall be doubly dear;
Fate ends what blindly I begun;
  The mandate let me then revere.
Those lands which late Lord Dacres held,
  To thee, brave youth, of right belong'd;
From them thy grandsire was expell'd,
  And all thy house most basely wrong'd.

But heav'n, the orphan's faithful ward,
Decree that they shall yet be thine ;
Shall I then rashly disregard
An ordinance that seems divine?
Soon shall the king confirm to thee
What is by legal right thy own ;
And I shall haply live to see
Myself yet happy in a son."
The turns of this eventful day,
The wond'ring crowd could but admire ;
And each preparing for his way,
Beg'd leave they homeward might retire.
" Nay, by my troth, (Sir Gilferd cried,)
This is what must not, cannot be;
A bridal I must yet provide,
Since one, my friends, you came to see.
My daughter shall be sent for strait,
And youthful Musgrave with all speed :
Here in my castle shall you wait,
Until you see how all succeed.
Meanwhile, to these two luckless lords,
Our joint attentions be preferr'd,
And, tho' the church no rites afford
To them, yet must they be interr'd.
That done, we here will solemnize
My daughter's nuptials with all joy,
And hope no accident may rise
Again, our pleasure to destroy.

Then straitway for Gillknockie hall
  A trusty courier they provide,
The lovely Ellen to recall,
  And Musgrave, now old Salkeld's pride.
With ready speed the servant flew,
  Nor ling'ring lagg'd, nor look'd behind,
Till Armstrong's castle struck his view,
  Near where the Esk and Liddle join'd.
Soon as the massy doors unbarr'd,
  The first that he discover'd there
Was Musgrave, walking in the yard,
  And by his side young Ellen fair.
" What news! what news! (the lady cried,)
  What news from Corby bring'st thou me?"
" Good news, fair dame, (the page replied,)
  Far better than you thought 'twould be.
Lord Dacres did Sir Fergus blame
  For your escape; with all his main,
Their quarrel rose—at length they came
  To weapons, and they both are slain.
Soon as your then afflicted sire
  Your letter got, his tears he dried,
And now avows his sole desire
  That you shall be young Musgrave's bride.
And I am by Sir Gilferd sent
  To hasten your return likewise;
For it is now his fix'd intent
  Your nuptials there to solemnize.

And Musgrave is declar'd the heir
Of all Lord Dacres' vast domains,
Which once his predecessors' were,
And which he now by right obtains."
" Well; thanks for thy auspicious tale,
(Fair Ellen to the servant said,)
When I arrive in Eden vale,
Thy tidings shall be well repaid."
So said—a friendly leave they took
Of Armstrong and his merry band,
The Scotian borders strait forsook,
And post away to Cumberland.
And mickle joy was there, I ween,
At Corby Castle on that day,
When safe returning home were seen
Young Musgrave and his lady gay.
With cheerful glee the bells were rung,
Whilst transport glisten'd thro' the hall,
And rich and poor, and old and young,
At Corby found a welcome call.
And long and happy liv'd the pair,
With ev'ry bliss that reason knows,
And heav'n's best joys may Corby share!
Which yet can boast a peerless Rose!

SIR ADAM OF CROOK DAKE,

A Legendary Tale.

ARGUMENT.

Crook Dake is an inconsiderate hamlet, about five miles west from Wigton, in Cumberland, where stands a hall of some antiquity. We know that the existence of a troubled spirit of a lady, who was supposed to be murdered here, and who still continues to haunt the mansion, often making her midnight excursions two or three miles from the place, to the great terror and annoyance of the country people, is as generally believed as is the existence of Crook-Dake Hall itself, (I mean by the credulous of that neighbourhood.) We are not in possession of many biographical anecdotes of Sir Adam; and indeed the most we know of him is, that in the church wall of Broomfield there is a niche, containing a stone coffin, bearing this inscription:

HERE LIES ENTOMBED, I DARE UNDERTAKE,
THAT MIGHTY WARRIOR SIR ADAM OF CROOK-DAKE,
KNIGHT.

He died sometime in the forepart of the sixteenth century, and has probably been one of those heroes who rendered themselves illustrious in the moss-trooping wars, as the frontier counties of both England and Scotland were in those times in most calamitous situations, being under continual alarm, and perpetually exposed to assaults and invasion, and very frequently the borders of both kingdoms suffering, by turns, the most horrible ravages of predatory warfare.

THE TALE.

Of all the chieftains of the North,
Since fam'd Sir Launcelot Du Lake,
Not one that led their vassals forth,
Could boast more valour or more worth
Than brave Sir Adam of Crook-Dake.

When, clad in armour, glitt'ring bright,
The threats of war the hero scorn'd;
Still foremost in the thick'ning fight,
Both friends and foes confess'd his might,
Whilst dignity his brows adorn'd.

Far scatter'd lay his vast domain,
Whilst crowds of menials throng'd his hall:
Five hundred warriors of his train
He yearly muster'd on the plain,
With horse and harness for them all.

When England's pow'rs great Surry led
To meet proud James on Flodden's field,
There, at his valiant legions' head,
The Knight thro' fair Northumbria sped,
With shining helmet, lance, and shield.

Here, 'midst the furious rage of war,
The champion like a lion press'd;
Whilst fell dismay before his car
Proclaim'd his prowess from afar,
And vict'ry hover'd o'er his crest.

Uncertain long the conflict stood,
With equal strife the battle rag'd;
Whilst Tweed pour'd down a crimson flood,
And ev'ry furrow stream'd with blood,
Where ire with equal ire engag'd.

Where'er Sir Adam led his train,
Chang'd was the aspect of the fray;
Before him heaps on heaps are slain,
That check his course, and dies the plain,
Whilst devastation marks his way.

At length, by force superior press'd,
The Scots forsake the carnag'd field;
And night, in gloomiest darkness dress'd,
Pursuit and slaughter to arrest,
Descends, and either host conceals.

Nor till returning morning's light,
Wist Surry of the foes' dismay;
But, under arms, the troops all night
Repose, to recommence the fight
With the commencement of the day.

Up rose the sun with dazzling glare,
O'er Cheviot's hills and Noreham's tow'rs;
Whilst all the host, with busy care,
For the renewing fight prepare,
And Surry musters all his pow'rs.

Along the Tweed the length'ning lines
To east and west their front extend;
The Chief to each concern inclines,
To each his proper part assigns,
Shews where t'attack, and where defend.

But what surprise possession took
Of each expecting warrior's face,
When with th' increasing light they look,
To find the Scottish camp forsook,
Nor one alive left near the place.

Conceal'd by night the Scots had fled,
And left the hard-contested plain;
Around the gore-stain'd space was spread,
With heaps on heaps of mangled dead,
And e'en their valiant prince was slain.

Till now suspense uncertain sway'd
Each soldier's breast with anxious care,
But, when no more on high display'd
The hostile ensigns are survey'd,
Loud shouts of triumph rend the air.

Awhile for short refreshment pass'd,
The English quit the crimson'd plain,
And, marching by the trumpet's blast,
The Northern borders leave with haste,
For their respective homes again.

Sir Adam, with his valiant band,
Up Tivot Dale their journey take;
But, ere they march'd, he gave command
That none to halt should stop nor stand,
Till safely landed at Crook Dake.

Well pleas'd, they wander'd all the night,
O'er bog and burn, full many a mile,
But fair they view, by morning light,
Not distant far, to glad their sight,
The lofty tow'rs of fair Carlisle.

Well pleas'd, the weary troop survey
The well-known prospects scatter'd round;
And as they nimbly post away,
Each bosom cheers, each face looks gay,
As if new spirits they had found.

And when they to the city came,
Loud shouts of vict'ry they raise;
With louder shouts the crowd proclaim
The fall of Scotland—England's fame,
And valiant brave Sir Adam's praise!

From hence a herald flies to bear
The tidings, with what haste may be;
And to direct his lady fair
A splendid banquet to prepare,
For him and his brave company.

And now their march afresh begun,
Forth thro' the western gate they take;
With eager steps they onward run,
And, long before the setting sun,
The gallant squadron reach Crook Dake.

Here, sounds of music charm their ears,
And shouts of welcome glad their hearts;
Fatigue is fled to join their fears,
Each face the smile of pleasure wears,
For each to each his joy imparts.

Meanwhile the knight, with courteous care,
Around on all indulgent smiles;
Directs the servants to prepare
The banquet, that his friends may share
His bounty, as they shar'd his toils.

And soon the spacious board is crown'd
With choicest viands, dress'd with grace;
Whilst music lends its cheering sound,
And swift the copious bowl goes round,
And noisy mirth pervades the place.

The knight's fair lady on the throng,
Pleas'd as her lord, indulgence smiles;
The minstrels raise the martial song,
The vaulted roof the sounds prolong,
And ev'ry heart forgets its toils.

Fair Catharine was a lady bright,
For beauty widely known to fame,
Her fortune might no baron slight,
Sole heiress of a wealthy knight,
Sir Guy De Valibus by name.

Her lord's return she saw, well pleas'd,
Victorious, safe, from Flodden's fight :
His happiness, she thought, increas'd
The zest of their convivial feast,
Which joy t'improve seem'd her delight.

Dame Catharine had a cousin fair,
Young Maud, for beauty fam'd was she,
Her father's darling, and his care,
Who was a baron, rich as rare,
For lord of Millham then was he.

Full swift the mirthful moments flew,
Loud laughter rung throughout the hall ;
The bowl capacious they renew,
With bumpers drench'd, the clam'rous crew
Forgot fatigue, respect, and all.

In fact, the can was briskly toss'd,
For goblet fast on goblet press'd ;
Sir Adam he, the knightly host,
Seem'd all reflection to have lost,
And madly bruited with the rest !

Thus lost to sense, the beauteous dame,
Fair Maud, all blooming, met his eyes ;
His bosom caught a lawless flame,
Which reason was not left to tame,
Nor calmer prudence to advise.

Long basely he occasion watch'd,
His foul desires to gratify;
The maid went forth, the trice he snatch'd,
And in his arms the fair one catch'd,
And forc'd her, struggling, to comply!

Thus wrong'd, debauch'd, without consent,
The beauteous fair one, in her prime,
Is forc'd, howe'er she may repent,
The knight's exposure to prevent,
To repetitions of her crime!

So, from a frequency of sin,
Which Maud, perhaps, at first might mourn,
Who, tho' reluctant to begin,
Is now in guilt so far stepp'd in,
The greater task is to return.

Long their illicit commerce pass'd
Without a bar their bliss t'annoy,
But shameful pregnancy at last
Threatens their intercourse to blast,
And shame at once their guilty joy.

Poor Maud, now conscious of her state,
With keen remorse and shame oppress'd,
In secret mourns her hapless fate,
Curses her crime, when now too late;
But conscience never lets her rest.

Fast from her cheek the roses fade,
  Her charms to captivate now cease;
A sickly languor doth pervade
Those eyes, which once such charms display'd
  In days of innocence and peace.

Where now to hide her guilty shame,
  How should the fair deluded know;
To none can she her griefs proclaim,
No cause for all her sorrows blame,
  But he, the author of her woe.

To him she makes her plaintive moan,
  To him she tells her hapless tale;
But foul reflections of his own
His bosom occupy alone,
  And little boots her bitter bale.

Indeed he tries to soothe her grief,
  And kindly solace would impart;
But say, what tongue can speak relief,
When conscience, like a guilty thief,
  Incessant haunts th' affrighted heart?

In guilt commutual, so in woe;
  From neither, neither hope can find;
As from one common channel flow
Their crimes, one common grief they know,
  And each afflicts each other's mind.

Grown tir'd with ev'ry social sport,
Poor Maud each busy circle shuns
Oft to the forest would resort,
Relief from solitude to court,
Yet meets that woe from which she runs.

It chanc'd one ev'ning with the knight
A walk the wailing damsel took;
The twinkling stars scarce lent their light,
Loud blew the wind, cold was the night,
As slow they wander'd near the brook.

Hoarse croak'd the raven 'mongst the trees,
The screech owl shriek'd with hideous scream;
When, lo! Sir Adam stopp'd, to seize
The hapless fair one, and, with ease,
He plung'd her headlong in the stream!

In vain she shriek'd—no aid was nigh—
Deep was the pool with recent rain;
And if poor Maud should haply try
To swim, Sir Adam, standing by,
Remorseless, dash'd her down again!

Home to his house Sir Adam flies,
And mingles with the jocund train;
But cheerfulness he vainly tries,
His countenance his heart belies,
And ev'ry effort proves in vain.

"Where is my lovely cousin Maud?
(Dame Catharine said,) where doth she stay?
I ne'er could charge her yet with fraud,
But now, methinks, I can't applaud
At midnight stealing thus away."

The midnight pass'd, the rosy dawn
Return'd, but brought not Maudy fair;
They sought her all across the lawn,
But found her not, till near withdrawn,
They sought the brook, and found her there!

Fair Catharine mourn'd for Maud right sore,
Sir Adam feign'd to do the same;
Her corpse six spotless virgins bore
To her cold grave, and all deplore
The fate of this unhappy dame.

But now her sadly-injur'd shade
Sir Adam haunts, both night and day;
Stung with remorse, with fear dismay'd,
He shuns the city and the shade,
But finds no peace, change where he may!

Thus horror, unallay'd, doth dwell
Within the guilty conscious breast;
Each mental comfort to dispel,
And in the heart erects a hell,
That never lets the villain rest.

One ev'ning, with his friends around,
Sir Adam sat within his hall;
When, lo! the bell, with solemn sound,
Struck—ONE!—The awful knell profound,
With horror quite surpris'd them all.

Loud bursts of thunder rend the air!
Which seem'd to shake the fabric's base;
Successive quick the light'nings glare
Each bosom melts with dire despair,
And heart-felt horror marks each face.

And next a dreadful shriek was heard,
Like one that doth for succour call;
The windows shook, the doors were stirr'd,
When, by the glimm'ring lights appear'd
A spectre! standing in the hall!

All dripping wet, with frightful mein,
A skeleton appear'd the face;
And in those holes where eyes had been,
Two filthy pebbles might be seen,
And slime besmear'd the vacant space!

The crowd with consternation look,
Unknowing how to act or say;
But most the knight with horror shook,
His heart sensation quite forsook,
And, stunn'd with fear, he swoon'd away!

When thus, with more than human sound,
The phantom broke the awful pause:—
"Rise up, base man! can I confound,
Or drive with fear a wretch to ground,
That dares defy all human laws?

"Was't not enough, perfidious knight,
My honour first to violate!
In hospitality's despite,
Unguarded, 'mid the gloom of night,
But murder, too, to perpetrate!

"What tho' no eye was by to look,
No ear to hear, nor arm to stay,
When you, by force, my honour took,
Or when you plung'd me in the brook,
Yet near is retribution's day.

"That all my wrongs aveng'd shall be,
Eternal justice has decreed;
This dagger here accept from me,
And when I claim it next from thee,
Prepare to follow me with speed!"

So said—she toss'd the blade to ground,
When strait a hideous shriek was heard
Without, terrific thunders sound,
Within blue flames fly hissing round,
And quick the spectre disappear'd!

Th' affrighted company withdraw,
  Confounded at the horrid scene;
So much their minds were fill'd with awe,
They scarcely trusted what they saw,
  Nor recollected what had been.

Fell horror fill'd Sir Adam's breast,
  And conscience, with its fell dismay;
The pangs of hell his heart infest,
Go where he will he cannot rest,
  The murder haunts him night and day!

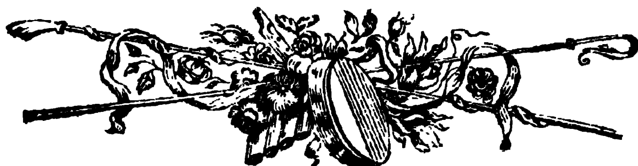
Thus shall the base deceiver know,
  Tho' guilt, unpunish'd for a time
May pass, yet justice sure, but slow,
Unerring aims th' impending blow,
  Nor pass'd by heav'n is such a crime.

Nor long the knight unsummon'd stay'd,
  His various crimes to answer for;
The ghost of Maud, much-injur'd maid,
Return'd, and claim'd the fatal blade,
  She, as a token, left before.

O'ercome with horror at the sight,
  With guilt and fear alike oppress'd;
Urg'd to despair, the cruel knight,
Quite frantic, in his friends' despite,
  The dagger plung'd into his breast!

So fell Sir Adam of Crook Dake;
So may all guilty villains fall!
But, if 'tis true what neighbours speak,
Strange gambols doth the lady make,
Ev'n to this day, at Crook Dake Hall.

At midnight, by the moon's pale beam,
Oft will she glide across the moor,
Or wander near the fatal stream,
And with remember'd horror scream,
And fright the lone benighted boor.



ARTHUR's CAVE.

A Legendary Tale.

ARGUMENT.

Such was the veneration and esteem in which King Arthur was held by his subjects, on account of his personal prowess and other extraordinary virtues, that, even after the battle in which he was slain, fighting with his cousin Modred, his faithful and steady adherents, the Ancient Britons, could never be persuaded of his death; for, as they had ever known him victorious in arms, they have been led to believe that he enjoyed immortality; and seeing, after the conflict, he was no where to be found in his native country, they concluded he had retired in disgust from a country which had been thus basely abandoned, and treacherously surrendered to the usurpation and oppressions of the insolent Saxons; and that he was then travelling through fairy land in quest of adventures—such as fighting with formidable giants, encountering and destroying dragons, and other monsters, and rescuing from the hands of cruel necromancers and others, many oppressed knights and damsels: nay, so long had the prevalency of this opinion continued, that in the reign of Henry the Second, a body happening, by chance, to be dug up near Glastonbury Abbey, without any symptoms of putrefaction or decay, the Welch, the descendants of the Ancient Britons, tenacious of the dignity and reputation of that illustrious hero, vainly supposed it could be no other than the body of their justly-boasted Pen-Dragon; and that he had been immured in that sepulchre by the spells of some powerful and implacable inchanter. Unaccountable are the stories of this sort that are related of him; and numberless are the volumes of romance, to which his imaginary adventures owe their foundation. Amongst the rest, the following is one; a legend well known in the county of Northumberland, and is there said to have happened at a place called Shoe-and-Shield. The story might, perhaps, with as much propriety, be placed at Penzance, at Berwick-upon-Tweed, or at John-o-Groat's house.



THE TALE.

LOUD o'er Cumbria's mountains howling
  Blew the whirlwind bleak and chill,
And the silent snow fast falling,
  Heap'd its drifts on ev'ry hill.

Dark the night was cold and dreary,
  Moon nor star could mortal ken,
And the fleaky tempest whirling,
  Levell'd fast each hill and glen.

Whilst the hoarse loud winds fierce raging,
  Thro' the darksome desert sound;
And the sturdy oaks outbattled,
  Bow their lofty heads to ground.

In a night thus dark and dreadful
  Bertrand wander'd thro' the dale,
In the boundless waste bewilder'd,
  Sinking 'neath the piercing gale.

Fearful of each step he ventur'd,
  For the buried gulph beneath;
Lost in darkness, and unshelter'd,
  All around seem'd certain death.

Not a sound his ear attracted,
Save the whirlwind's deaf'ning blast;
Not a ray of light illum'd him,
Save the snow bewildering waste.

Horror-struck, benumb'd, and fainting,
Down the dale poor Bertrand drew;
When, least hop'd, a shelt'ring cavern
Close at hand appear'd in view.

Ne'er was kindly inn more welcome
To the weary pilgrim's feet;
Ne'er unto the sea-rock'd sailor
Was the wish'd-for port more sweet.

In the storm-struck stranger ventur'd;
Darkness compass'd him around;
And an universal silence,
Save the tempest's bellowing sound.

More within the cave retiring,
From the chillness of the night;
Through the circling gloom he fancied
He beheld a glimm'ring light.

Tho' it feeble seem'd, and distant,
Yet it cheer'd his sinking hopes;
And, with careful steps, the stranger
Onward thro' the cavern gropes:

At each step that he advances,
 Nearer beams the bright'ning blaze;
And, ere long, a scene presents him
 That might wonder's self amaze.

Here appear'd a hall most spacious,
 Gaily lamp'd and lighted round;
Tables spread in ample order,
 And fresh rushes on the ground.

In the midst a princely figure,
 Sleeping on a pellet lay,
And a goodly groupe around him,
 Gallant knights and ladies gay.

Yet the whole seem'd wrapp'd in slumber,
 Nothing breath'd about the place;
Tho' the bloom of youth and beauty
 Sat confess'd in ev'ry face.

Finely wrought, a burnish'd helmet
 Lay beside the prince's head;
And upon the casque refulgent,
 Wreath'd, a dragon's form was spread.

Heaps of shields and glitt'ring lances
 Stood reclin'd against the wall;
Coats of mail and other armour
 Lay confus'd about the hall.

Mute with awe, and lost in wonder,
  Bertrand stood and view'd the scene;
But a grate, well barr'd and bolted,
  Stood the whole and him between.

On one hand a winding bugle,
  Hung suspended by a chain,
This he seiz'd; but fear arising,
  Quick he laid it down again.

In its sheath a shining faulchion,
  On the other hand was laid;
Bertrand, curious to behold it,
  Half unsheath'd the shining blade.

As he drew the blade, the sleepers
  Rais'd their heads, and deeply mourn'd;
This he saw, but, struck with horror,
  To its sheath the blade return'd.

As the sword into the scabbard
  Bertrand thrust with might and main,
So the groupe of hapless sleepers
  Laid them down and slept again!

But the distant rays of morning
  Thro' the cave began to dawn;
Bertrand, famish'd, cold, and weary,
  Left the cell to seek the lawn.

Yet, as thro' the dreary windings
  Slow he sought the mazy way,
From within a voice came sounding,
  Thus, aloud, was heard to say:

"Woe to thee, ill-fated Bertrand,
  Woe that ever thou wast born;
That wouldst neither draw the faulchion,
  Nor yet sound the fatal horn!"

Heedless of th' uncommon menace,
  Homeward hied the weary boor;
Thro' the snow, now deeply drifted,
  O'er the mountain and the moor.

Sometimes sinking, sometimes sliding,
  Long he fought the bitter gale;
Home at last he gains, quite jaded,
  Where he tells the wond'rous tale.

Vers'd in legendary story,
  List'ning swains their verdict gave,
That, from Bertrand's plain relation,
  This must be King Arthur's cave.

Where, as common fame reported,
  By a vile magician's spell,
That brave prince and court lay sleeping,
  In a solitary cell!

Off with speed the rustics rambled,
Bent to free this hapless train;
Thro' each glen, and round each mountain,
Long they sought, but sought in vain.

Nothing like the cave presented,
Nothing like the place was seen;
Home they turn'd, all disappointed,
Tir'd with ranging, vex'd with spleen

Oft among the moorlands dreary
Bertrand sought the place alone;
But, in vain; for, to this moment,
Arthur's cave remains unknown.



THE

MESSENGER OF DEATH.

"RISE from your couch, fair Lady Jane,
And drive the slumbers from your ee',
Rise from your couch, fair Lady Jane,
For I have tidings brought for thee."

But seldom slumbers Lady Jane,
But seldom visits sleep her ee';
O'er-wakeful render'd by her woe,
Yet, say, what tidings bring'st thou me?

Loud blust'ring howls the wint'ry gale,
Hark! how the neighb'ring torrents pour!
I fear 'tis but some wanton wight,
That mocks me at this midnight hour.

"Shake off thy slumbers, Lady Jane,
Rise from thy couch, and come away;
Shake off thy slumbers, Lady Jane,
For I'm in haste, and must not stay."

" Say, stranger, what can be thy haste,
Or what may this thine errand be?
From whom, and wherefore art thou sent;
Or say, what tidings bring'st thou me?

" Lord Walter, he my wedded Lord,
Now wins on fair Hesperia's plains,
Where proud Britannia's banners fly,
Where death and devastation reigns!

" Three months are scarcely pass'd and gone,
Tho' three long tedious months to me,
Since brave Lord Walter left these arms,
And with his squadrons put to sea.

" Tho' long and tedious seems the time,
Yet well I ween too short by far,
To think of news from him my Lord,
Or tidings from the woeful war."

" Rise from thy couch, fair Lady Jane,
Rise from thy couch, and follow me;
'Tis from Lord Walter's self I come,
I am his messenger to thee."

" Bleak o'er the heath the whirlwind blows,
Fast falls the rain, as fast can be;
Yet, since thou bear'st my Lord's behest,
I'll leave my couch, and come to thee.

"But, tell me, stranger, tell me where
 Lord Walter wins, and how he fares;
For tho' from him I fain would hear,
 My bosom labours with its cares.

"Would it become Lord Walter's wife,
 Would it become his Lady Jane,
At midnight hour to leave her couch,
 And with a stranger walk the plain?"

"Rise from thy couch, thou Lady Jane,
 Arise, and make no more delay;
The night's far spent, and I'm in haste,
 And here I must no longer stay.

"Near where the foaming Derwent rolls,
 Its currents westward to the sea,
There on the beach, by Solway's side,
 Lord Walter anxious waits for thee."

Swift to her well-known master's call,
 Up from the brake the falcon springs,
And to the whistling summons hies,
 In eager speed, on outstretch'd wings.

So from her couch sprang Lady Jane;
 In sooth, she was not slack nor slow,
Nor fear'd she once the drenching rain,
 Nor car'd she how the winds might blow.

And she's put on her kertle green,
Her scarf and mantle made of blue;
And donn'd her up wi mickle haste,
Her midnight journey to pursue.

And she's unbarr'd the outer door,
And ventur'd 'midst the wind and rain,
And with the urgent stranger sped,
All storm-struck o'er the dreary plain.

O'er hill and dale, thro' bog and burn,
And many a glen they swiftly hied;
Nor spoke they once, nor stopp'd, nor stay'd,
Until they reach'd the Solway side.

The night was dark, the boist'rous main
Impetuous dash'd against the shore;
And oft the water sprite was heard
To shriek with loud terrific roar!

" Where is my love? (said Lady Jane,)
O bring Lord Walter quick to me;
I see the sea, I see the shore,
But no Lord Walter can I see."

" O Lady Jane, (the stranger cried,)
Fair Lady, ever kind and true;
Why shrink you thus with foolish fear?
Lord Walter's spirit speaks to you!

" In Biscay's well-known stormy bay,
Our vessel sank, no more to rise;
There, buried in a wat'ry grave,
All cold, thy long-lov'd husband lies.

" Constant and kind to me in life,
Thou held'st dominion o'er my heart;
Our love was mutual; then, shall death,
Our love, so well establish'd, part?"

Cold horror seiz'd fair Lady Jane,
Her frame with deadly terror shook;
An icy coldness chill'd her blood,
And motion ev'ry pulse forsook.

With silent and insensate stare,
She view'd the spectre o'er and o'er,
But such an awful hideous sight
Her eyes had never seen before.

All deadly meagre gloom'd his face,
Of flesh by hideous monsters stripp'd;
Sea-bubbles fill'd his vacant eyes,
And from his clothes the waters dripp'd.

His temples, once so comely fair,
Were now with sea-weed compass'd round;
And filthy coils of tangle foul
The parts of his fair body bound.

When thus, with hollow voice, once more,
The phantom said—" Howe'er it be,
You must to-night, fair Lady Jane,
Expect to sleep in death with me!"

She shriek'd, and lifeless on the shore
She fell; when swift a swelling wave
Roll'd o'er her, and, with its recoil,
Entomb'd her in a wat'ry grave!

No more was heard of Lady Jane;
Lord Walter he was seen no more,
Save that the neighbours sometimes see
Their spirits wander by the shore;

And oft amidst the whirlwind's blast
Is heard full many a hideous scream,
And two strange figures often glide
Along the side of Derwent stream!



THE

WHITE WOMAN.

THE MANNER FROM LEWIS, THOUGH THE TALE IS A FACT.

JOHANNA had reach'd the meridian of life,
Was as fair as the blossom in June;
Young Fred'rick had recently made her his wife,
Unenvied they liv'd without care, without strife,
And their happiness seem'd in its noon.

Content at her wheel she would cheerfully sing
Thro' the length of the long summer day;
'Whilst he thro'the autumn,the summer, the spring,
Industriously toil'd their small pittance to bring,
For they both were as frugal as gay.

One day at the door of the alehouse they sat,
The villagers seated around;
'Twas holiday time, and their neighbourly chat
Gave zest to their liquor, tho' neither was flat,
As each care in a bumper was drown'd.

Around within view the whole village it lay,
Which gave fair Johanna her birth;
Close at hand the old church you might eas'ly survey
The tall spreading ash and the steeple so gay,
Tho' these objects took not from their mirth.

For innocence seldom can know that dismay
That guilt's so oft doom'd to sustain;
The heart of each rustic on that happy day,
Beat high with contentment, each visage was gay,
And joy seem'd to spread thro' the train.

When sudden, Johanna, with wild frantic roar,
Cried—"Save me! or else I am gone!
The white woman's coming from yon church-yard door;
The cruel white woman! I've seen her before;
See! this way she stalks, all alone."

"What woman! (cried Fred'rick, with ghastly surprise,)
What woman? there's none that I see!"
"Yes, yes; the white woman! (Johanna replies,)
Behold her lank form, and her two flaming eyes!
I know that she's coming for me!

"I saw the grave open! I saw her come out!
Her shroud is as white as the snow;
Corruption besmears her foul temples about,
Whilst volumes of worms from her mouth she casts out,
She comes for Johanna I know.

And see! thro' the church-yard in shrouded array
The spectres and goblins they roam;
They seem with dire menace to chide her delay,
And shriek to the white woman, Come, come away,
Johanna must come to the tomb!

" Like furies but see how they tear up the mould,
They howl, but how dismally drear!
Like footballs the skulls of my kindred are roll'd
O'er the graves!—There the ghost of my mother behold!
O save me! the white woman's here!

" I've seen her before; I remember her well!
See! faster and nearer she draws;
O Fred'rick! her dreadful approaches repel;
Bear me off—force her back—drive the beldam to hell!
Ere I'm touch'd with her skeleton paws.

" O save me! O save me! dear Fred'rick, her blast
Is as cold as is winter's cold breath!
She crawls up my clothes—oh! have mercy at last,
The cruel white woman embraces me fast!
And she says that her errand is death.

" Help! help! my dear Fred'rick! O where are your hands?
Those hands, poor Johanna should save;
The fiend has o'erpow'rd him, he motionless stands,
Altho' his sad wife the white woman demands,
And pulls me away to the grave.

"No! cruel white woman, I'll not come at all,
My Fred'rick shall bind up my head;
Yet, hark! the fell furies incessantly call,
Come, come to yon church-yard, you must, and you shall,
For there we've prepar'd your last bed!"

Delirious and raving, Johanna was borne
To her home, and each cordial applied;
The fate of the poor hapless fair one they mourn,
Whilst Fred'rick, all pensive, in anguish forlorn,
The live-long night watch'd by her side.

All night in wild phrenzy, in horror and pain,
She starts with convulsive affright!
She shrieks—"The white woman!" with might and with main,
"The cruel white woman!" again and again,
For the phantom still dwells on her sight.

Next day, more compos'd, with the nightingale's lay,
She sung, by her phrenzy inspir'd,
From morning till ev'ning she carrol'd away,
"Begone! thou white woman! get from me, I say!"
Nor once with her song ever tir'd.

The third morning came, but she made no reply
  To a word that was ask'd or was said;
But, still she kept chaunting—" White woman, out! fie!
Get hence, foul white woman! I'll come by and by!"—
  By eve-tide Johanna was dead!



THE

WATER-SPIRIT.

BEATRIX, lovely maiden fair,
Sat by the river side;
Loose and dishevell'd wav'd her hair,
Her bosom to the blast was bare,
And bitterly she sigh'd.

The scalding torrents from her eyes
Had blanch'd her sallow cheek;
Her voice was hoarse with piteous cries,
Her heart was sore with bursting sighs,
And woes she could not speak.

Her eyes were blear'd, and languid shone,
Which once were lovely bright;
The rose-bud from her face was flown,
And blasted ere 'twas fully blown,
By sorrow's bitter blight.

Unshelter'd from the chilly blast,
She sat the live-long day;
And as the whirling eddy pass'd,
On it a wistful look she cast,
But not a word would say.

Around her all the warbling throng,
Their blythest carrols tried;
Unseen by her they skim along,
Unheard by her they chaunt their song,
She only sat and sigh'd.

The winds with melancholy howl,
Deep murmur thro' the wood;
The stream grows turbid, black, and foul,
The waters like a torrent roll,
And rage into a flood.

Beatrix fix'd an earnest look
Upon the waters near;
When, lo! emerging from the brook,
A form she saw, which she mistook
For one she lov'd most dear.

"Art thou my Lionel? (she cried,)
Ah! whither hast thou been?
Long has Beatrix sat and sigh'd,
In bitter anguish hath she cried,
On this unshelter'd green.

"Ah, no, alas! it cannot be,
My eyes have been mista'en;
Twelve months are pass'd since hapless he
Adventur'd on the stormy sea,
Bu tne'er return'd again.

"The bark, near Scandinavia's shore,
Is founder'd in the deep;
He sunk, with nine brave comrades more,
They sleep in death, their voy'ge is o'er,
And I am left to weep."

"Why dost thou sit and weep, fair maid?
Why dost thou sit and mourn?
Why thus thy golden tresses braid,
When he, thy lover, is low laid
And never can return?

"Beatrix, Lionel thy love
Now chides thy long delay;
He says, thy ling'ring here doth prove
A want of kindness and of love,
Whatever thou may'st say."

"What wouldst thou, spirit of the deep,
What wouldst thou have me say?
For him I sigh, for him I weep,
For him I sleepless vigils keep,
As well by night as day.

"For him I keep my virgin vow,
For him I pensive pine;
Here sit and view the river flow,
Here sit and weep—here vent my woe,
But solace is not mine."

"Ah! maiden fair, 'tis bootless care,
To sit and waste thy charms;
Those charms thy Lionel should share,
Avail not him—sweet maid, prepare
To waft thee to his arms."

"Where are those arms, that I may fly
And rush in their embrace?
For here a double death I die,
My eyes have wept till they are dry,
And wither'd is my face.

"But slowly beats my flutt'ring heart,
But slowly runs my blood;
My brain runs whirling, and each part,
Beats with excruciating smart,
Which cannot be withstood.

"But (quickly whispering) spirit, say,
What makes thee bend so near?
From whence, and whither is thy way?
To whom—why dost thou ling'ring stay,
And what thy business here?"

"I am the monarch of the main,
Of fountains, and of streams;
Extensive is my mighty reign,
My boundless empire doth contain
Earth's uttermost extremes.

"From Jutland's ivy coast am I,
Fair maid, to wait on thee;
There doth thy long-lost lover lie,
Therefore prepare thee, by and by,
To-night to lie with me."

"Foul spirit, I'll not be thy bride,
I do not like thy mein;
Thy aspect is so blanch'd, beside
Thy azure eyes that glare so wide;
And then thy locks are green!

"My Lionel was lovely fair,
Was comely to behold,
The fairest rose that scents the air
Sat on his checks, his flowing hair
Was like the threads of gold.

"But, spirit, thou hast such a hue,
With running in the tide,
Thy skin so scaly is, and blue,
Thy body is mis-shapen too,
I will not be thy bride."

"Thou shalt not be my bride, fair maid,
That wish'd I not to be;
But he, thy lover, thus hath said,
(In ocean's pearly couch now laid,)
"Go, bring my love to me."

"O gentle spirit of the deep,
In verity declare,
Dost thou the peaceful chambers keep
Where my lov'd Lionel doth sleep,
Or can'st thou help me there?"

"Fair maiden, thou shalt go with me,
I'll bear thee to his bed;
The tritons they shall play for thee,
With sparkling crowns of coral, we
Will decorate thy head."

"O peaceful spirit, let me fly,
I long to reach the place;
There shall my Lionel and I
In undisturb'd embraces lie,
Shall endlessly embrace."

She lean'd upon the spirit's hand,
Her limbs were stiff and cold;
And she has totter'd to the strand,
But, at the river, made a stand;
The enterprize was bold.

But he has urg'd the fair one on,
And cries—"Come, come away,
Beatrix, we must hence begone,
For time and tide will wait for none—
And, hark! he chides thy stay."

But, hear her scream—" Ah! me, I sink!
  The water stops my breath;
My heart will burst!—my spirits shrink!
The draught of destiny I drink,"
  She said—and sank in death.



JOHNNY BROWN

AND

GRANNY BELL.

OLD Johnny Brown liv'd up yon hill,
Old Granny Bell liv'd on the moor;
Now, Johnny Brown was very rich,
But Granny Bell was very poor:

His coffers groan'd with hoarded wealth,
His spacious barns were fill'd with corn,
Unnumber'd flocks were in his fold,
But greedier wretch was never born.

Poor Granny Bell was turn'd fourscore,
Bent down with age and poverty;
Decrepid grown, and weak with want,
The poorest of the poor was she.

Hence from their various fates ensued,
Of being poor, and being rich,
That Johnny Brown was reckon'd wise,
And Granny Bell was call'd a witch.

In bleak December, when the snows,
Deep drifted o'er the moors, were spread,
She hobbled up to Johnny's house,
To beg a morsel of his bread.

"Do, do, good neighbours, do, (she cried,)
My wants with pitying eyes behold;
A morsel spare me, or I die,
O'ercome with hunger and with cold.

"For once, some kindly comfort give,
The wint'ry blasts, hark! how they roar!
Short is my journey to the grave!
Perhaps I'll trouble you no more."

"Aroint thee, witch! (quoth Johnny Brown,)
Now, by the mass! that must not be;
For had I ten times what I have,
I would not give a mite to thee."

Stung with this sharpness of reply,
In mutt'ring tone the caitiff swore;
And pray'd his substance, kyth and kin,
That heav'n would never prosper more

He heard her execrations dire,
They fill'd his inmost soul with dread;
Next morning brought the doleful news,
The best milk cow he had was dead!

Ere noon, his son, to market sent,
He heard by rogues had been beguil'd;
His wife, ere ev'ning, told him too,
Their eldest daughter was with child.

"Now, by my sooth, (says Johnny Brown,)
The beldam bears me mickle spite;
But ere such mischief I'll endure,
I'll shoot the witch this very night."

The night was hush'd, the moon shone clear,
The air was keen as keen could be,
When Johnny Brown his firelock took,
And out with deadly wrath went he.

In ev'ry corner that he pass'd,
Around the hayrick and the well,
He look'd with curious eye, in hopes
To find poor hapless Granny Bell.

At length, between him and the light,
He thought he saw the wish'd-for game;
"Yes, yes! she's there!" (quoth Johnny Brown,)
So straightway took his vengeful aim!

Off went the piece, unerring true,
The bullet whistled thro' the air;
With speed he ran to seize the prize,
But, lo! he'd shot his best grey mare!

Thus foil'd for once, went Johnny Brown,
  Home to his house with burning gall;
But swore if morning light were come,
  To burn the witch, her house, and all.

The foul design so fill'd his mind,
  That, e'en tho' fast asleep, he rose,
And snatch'd a firebrand from the hearth;
  And to his fatal purpose goes.

His wife she miss'd him from her side,
  She rose with haste the cause to learn;
There spied she luckless Johnny Brown
  About to fire his well-stock'd barn!

She shriek'd right loud, as well she might,
  The husband 'woke with this alarm;
But, in the moment of surprise,
  Poor Johnny fell, and broke his arm!

What mischiefs happen'd Johnny Brown,
  In consequence of Granny Bell;
From first to last, to him and his,
  I'm sure are more than I can tell.

" Now, foul befal the hellish hag,
  (Quoth Johnny Brown,) she doth me twitch.
But, if there's justice in the land,
  I will exterminate the witch."

So said—next morning with the light
 Vindictive Johnny Brown arose;
And with his neighbours and his friends,
 To seek the hapless beldam goes.

But disappointed was their rage,
 No witch to torture they behold!
For, on a lowly straw-made couch,
 Lay Granny Bell, both stiff and cold:



THE HARPER

THERE came a harper o'er the lee,
Just as the hour was getting late;
And he has tun'd his harp with glee,
And play'd at our Lord Baron's gate.

And he has struck each trembling string,
That sweetly echo'd thro' the hall;
And he has made the mansion ring,
And pleas'd the lords and ladies all:

In sooth, he was a harper rare,
As ever touch'd the quiv'ring wire;
Harmonious sweetness grac'd the air,
The song bespoke poetic fire.

"Come to my hall, (Lord Valens said,)
Come to my hall and welcome be;
Of all the lyrists that have play'd,
None ever surely equall'd thee!

"I've heard the Cumbrian minstrel play,
I've heard the Caledonian chore;
But such a sweet melodious lay
I swear I never heard before.

Into the hall the harper wends,
Amidst the fair and gallant train,
Where as he plays, his music mends,
And all are ravish'd with his strain.

"Now tell me, minstrel, if you will,
(Lord Valens said,) where have you been,
To gain so competent a skill,
And what strange regions have you seen?

"For your address informs me well
That you have been in foreign parts;
And tho' in music you excel,
Yet have you studied other arts."

"Your courtesy, my Lord, is such,
That all my frankness it demands;
Good certes, I have travell'd much,
And been in many foreign lands.

"There's not a nation, great or small.
In which I have not something seen;
Nor yet a court amongst them all,
In which I have not some time been.

"Before the greatest kings on earth,
With loud applauses have I play'd;
For mightiest monarchs have made mirth,
And been by them profusely paid.

"The Soldan of Damascus, he
On me this scimitar bestow'd,
Which I to you present as free,
For all this kindness you have show'd.

"Its qualities, my Lord, are rare,
That like it in the world is none;
Whilst this you keep, and keep with care,
You never shall be overthrown.

"Besides, with it you may with ease
Most strange appearances produce,
Or to advantage, or to please;—
Experience best will shew its use.

"And this, fair lady, is for you,
A mantle call'd—The Lease of Love;
With this, past pleasure shall renew,
And age your beauty shall improve."

Lord Valens had a daughter fair,
And Adeliza was her name;
Of beauty she had such a share,
That far and near was spread her fame.

Angelic sweetness flush'd her face,
Her eyes were sparkling, yet serene;
And those, who mark'd her easy grace,
Were wont to style her Beauty's queen.

To her a sparkling ring he gave,
Saying—"This, fair maid, is mete for thee,
Possessing this you still shall have
Increase of love and constancy."

"Now, by my troth, (Lord Valens cried,)
Thy liberality is such,
That, setting courtesy aside,
I would avow it were too much."

Now Lady Anastatia rose,
And round her hath the mantle thrown ;
Her face its virtues plainly shews
In graces not before its own.

Lord Valens he has ta'en likewise
The sword, and struck it on the ground,
When, lo! a tree is seen to rise
With blooming grapes enclust'ring round.

But Adeliza, lovely maid,
Has on her finger put the ring,
And, doubtful, to herself hath said—
"Let's see what wonder this will bring!"

But when the ring her finger press'd,
She felt herself quite chang'd, I trow;
New passions seem'd to warm her breast,
She saw, she felt, she scarce knew how.

For he, the harper, who appears
To all, save Adeliza fair,
Sore worn with labour and with years,
And harrow'd by the hand of care,—

To her appears in beauty's bloom,
With youthful mein and comely face;
Nor one besides in all the room
Might match with him in manly grace.

A flame had caught the fair one's breast,
A flame she never felt before;
Nor for a moment could she rest,
But as she gaz'd, she lov'd the more.

And to herself she silent said—
" How comely is the harper! he
Of all the world I'd wish to wed—
The harper is the man for me."

The harper strikes again the strings,
His strains the passions well express'd;
Again the vaulted mansion rings,
And pleasure thrills in ev'ry breast.

But most transported with the song
Was lovely Adeliza; she
This chorus caroll'd all along,
" The harper is the man for me!"

At length arriv'd the midnight hour;
Well pleas'd the company withdrew;
Nor one in chamber or in bow'r
But slept that night right sound, I trow;

Save Adeliza, lovely fair,
The harper he so fill'd her head;
Of sleep she had but little share,
And silently she's left her bed.

And she's put on her kirtle green,
Unmindful what the folks might say;
And thro' the dark has ventur'd clean,
To where the wakeful harper lay.

"Come to my bed, sweet lady fair,
(The merry minstrel whisp'ring cried,)
Come to my bed, sweet lady fair,
For thou shalt be my bonny bride."

"Ah! what is this that makes me start,
Or what is it that urges me?
Thou hast bewitch'd my virgin heart,
And I must come to bed to thee."

The harper took her to his arms,
Right amorously they pass'd the night,
In full possession of her charms,
Till fairly shone the morning light.

Lord Valens rose by dawn of day,
And to his page aloud did call,
" Go, bring the harper here straightway,
And let him join me in the hall.

" For I've a curious vision seen,
The which perhaps he may unfold—
I dreamt my daughter was a queen,
And habited in robes of gold."

The page at his Lord's bidding ran
With all the speed that well might be;
But when he to the chamber wan,
Nor harp nor harper there met he.

They search'd the castle round and round,
They march'd the chambers thro' and thro';
But harper no where could be found,
Tho' none of his departure knew.

They call'd the porter from the gate—
When thus on oath did he declare:
" I've watch'd it soon, I've watch'd it late,
But man or mortal pass'd not there."

Then said Lord Valens hastily,
" Now to my daughter's chamber go,
Enquire at her if haply she
May something of the harper know."

Then to her chamber quick went they,
And back as quickly to the hall,
And to Lord Valens told straightway,
His daughter she was gone and all.

"Now, by the rood, (Lord Valens cried,)
Foul doings have been practis'd here;
She's some vile necromancer's bride,
Or else some elfin wight's I fear.

"But, by the holy virgin dame!
If I this harper meet with soon,
I'll teach the varlet other game,
And, for a season, change his tune."

And he has ta'en the goodliest steed
That there was standing in the stall,
And he's adventur'd forth with speed,
In comely armour clad withal.

Fast o'er the mountains did he hie,
As fast o'er haught and valley scour,
But house nor hall did he espy,
Till ev'ning shades began to lour.

When, at a distance, he survey'd
A lonely mansion o'er the lee,
"Whate'er be here, (Lord Valens said,)
To-night here must my lodging be."

He spurr'd his courser o'er the moor,
  And soon he reach'd the castle-gate:
But long he thunder'd at the door,
  Ere page or porter came to wait.

At length a surly servant came,
  From whose foul looks and frowning face,
Lord Valens might a presage form
  Both of the master and the place.

"What brings thee here, (he sternly cried,)
  Uncourteous knight, to knock so late?
My Lord is arming him aside,
  And means to give thee battle straight."

"I did not come, (Lord Valens said,)
  With ill intent, much less to fight,
But only hop'd I might have made
  A lodging here, for one short night."

"'Tis like enough, (the oaf replied,)
  That your request you may obtain,
And lodge here till you're satisfied,
  Before I let you out again;

"For know the terms that we afford
  To all that venture here like thee—
Is, to do combat with my Lord,
  Or yield them, and his prisoners be!"

"Now, devil take thy Lord, say I,
And thee and all, thou saucy knave!
If with your boasts your valour vie,
You, doubtless, both are very brave.

"Go, tell him not to make delay,
But hasten, as I wait the fight;
For in his hall I mean to stay,
With or without his leave, to-night."

"Now, by my sooth, (the porter said,)
This menace suits thy station ill;
Thou may'st, proud knight, perhaps be made
To stay all night against thy will.

"But if it chance to be thy lot
Here, maugre thy consent, to be,
In solitude thou pinest not,
For here is store of company.

"Full many a Lord of high renown,
And many a foolish-boasting knight,
Have very humbly here sat down,
As likely thou may'st do to-night."

"Now, God confound thee! chattering elf,
Thy words at least bespeak thy will;
Thy master comes not forth himself:
Take thou this earnest of my skill.

"At least, 'twill let thy master know
His menace is to me no dread."
So saying, with a furious blow,
He from his shoulders smote his head!

At length the castle-knight appear'd,
In armour harness'd cap-a-pee;
His pond'rous lance he held uprear'd,
And gaily mounted, too, was he.

With threats and execrations loud,
The traitor marshall'd his advance;
And from afar, in gestures proud,
He boastful shook his threat'ning lance.

But when the porter he beheld
All lifeless in the postern lie,
Increasing rage his bosom fill'd,
And death and vengeance was his cry.

"Full dearly shalt thou, stranger knight,
This cruel outrage soon repay;
And, tho' thou dost contemn my might,
Shalt rue thou ever came this way."

He took his seat, and couch'd his lance,
And ran his furious headlong course;
Lord Valens saw his mad advance,
And, turning, mock'd his idle force.

But as enrag'd he past him sped,
  This nimbly stooping to the place,
Snatch'd from the ground the porter's head,
  And dash'd it in the braggart's face!

Provok'd, beyond all common bounds,
  Fierce to the combat he returns;
The welkin with his voice resounds,
  His face with indignation burns.

Fierce was the shock, for such a pair
  To neither would the other yield;
Their shining lances glanc'd in air,
  And rudely shield encounter'd shield.

Lord Valens drew the blade so bright,
  The very blade the harper gave,
To try its metal on the knight,
  And, sooth, it prov'd a gallant glaive.

For at one well-directed blow,
  It cleft his glitt'ring casque in twain,
And passing onward deep below,
  It trenches wide the traitor's brain!

Prone from his horse he lifeless fell—
  "So fare all knaves! (Lord Valens cried,)
This outside promises right well,
  Let's see what's here to do beside.

Then to the castle he proceeds,
With all the haste that he could hie;
No let his further course impedes,
The menials in confusion fly.

Fast thro' the hall the Baron went,
To search the vaulted dungeons round;
And there in chains and darkness pent,
Full fifty captive knights he found.

"Now shall you all right merry be
With me this night, (Lord Valens said;)
I am your host: base Kenrick, he
Your former one, by me lies dead."

Then were the knights well pleas'd to hear
These tidings, as in sooth they might,
For in the lonely dungeon drear
They had but been in rueful plight.

And they're assembled in the hall,
Where plenteous dainties they have found:
And ev'ry thought of former thrall
Is in the cheering goblet drown'd.

But soon as daylight streak'd the east,
The baron he, without repose,
Departed, leaving all the rest,
Each one to take the road he chose,

And as on yesterday, with haste
O'er fen and forest fast rode he,
To-day thro' wilderness and waste
He swifter speeds, if such may be.

The sun had reach'd its noon-tide stage,
Ere man or mansion had he spied;
For such was then his onward rage,
He scarcely ever look'd aside.

But, as he for a moment stood
To rest his jaded steed withal,
Within the curtain of a wood,
He there beheld a princely hall.

Too tir'd for ceremony, he
Resolv'd to wait not mickle grace;
But, spurring forward o'er the lee,
He in a trice was at the place.

And, as he drew towards the dome,
The sound of mirth assail'd his ears;
Which from the mansion seem'd to come—
Quoth he—"This prelude rather cheers.

"Well am I sure that where there's mirth,
There cannot much ill nature be;
Spleen gives to unpoliteness birth,
And cheerfulness to courtesy.

And he has reach'd the castle-gate,
  And loudly at the ring rang he;
But readier here were they to wait,
  For servants there came two or three.

"Now welcome art thou to our hall,
  Most courteous stranger knight, (said they;)
Most welcome, (answer'd one and all,)
  And long and pleasant be your stay.

"Right glad will be my Lord, I trow,
  To entertain you with good cheer;
And glad my Lady be also,
  When she shall know that you are here."

"And fair and merry may you be,
  (Lord Valens said,) and fair betide,
For this your welcome frank and free,
  Your courteous master and his bride."

Now they have ta'en the Baron's steed,
  And led it to a goodly stall;
And they've Lord Valens led with speed,
  Politely to the mirthful hall.

But as he enter'd, more and more
  His wonder was awoke I ween,
For he in all his life before
  So fair a party ne'er had seen.

The tables groan'd with piles of food,
Whereon might kings and princes dine,
And flowing full the vases stood,
With rarest and with costliest wine!

The company who sat around,
Were each in princely vestments dress'd;
And from each chamber music's sound
Gave to the banquet double zest.

"Here, take your place, sir stranger knight,
And share right freely in our cheer;
Lord Proteus should have been by right,
But he will presently be here.

"But 'tis not needful we delay
Until my Lord's return; at least,
We are his commoners each day,
And can without him share the feast."

So said—the company fell on,
Without long waiting for the grace;
The hungry Baron, too, anon,
Seem'd with the foremost to keep pace.

And now the banquet being o'er,
The cheering minstrels strike the strings,
The hall resounds with laughter's roar,
And music thro' the mansion rings.

But how, amid the tuneful choir,
Was he surpris'd, the Baron bold,
With those that struck the trembling lyre,
His quondam harper to behold!

All seated on a gorgeous throne,
In royal dignity he sate;
In splendour he might yield to none,
That ever bore the badge of state.

Fair Adeliza by his side
Sat on another throne as fair;
Array'd in royalty's fair pride,
And beauty, more than mortal's share.

" Now, by my troth, (Lord Valens said,)
Base harper, whatsoe'er thou be,
Thou hast foul incantations play'd,
Both on my daughter and on me.

" But now, foul traitor! to thy woe,
This rape ungen'rous shalt thou pay;
And curse the moment thou didst know
My house, or stole my child away."

Then, in a rage, Lord Valens rose,
And furious rush'd across the floor;
Towards the orchestra he goes,
But cursing, as he went, full sore.

Quick from its sheath his trusty blade
With hasty hand in wrath drew he;
But from his grasp it was convey'd,
But how or where he could not see.

And by his side a lady stood,
All comely, affable, and gay;
Who press'd his hand, and begg'd he would
Politely dance with her that day.

"Indeed, fair dame, (the Baron said,)
I am not in a dancing mood;
But when such beauty comes in aid,
The suit can be but ill withstood."

Then up his mirth-inspiring lyre
In haste the merry minstrel drew;
Its strains awoke the slumb'ring choir,
And to the dance Lord Valens flew.

And gaily hopp'd he round the hall,
And frisk'd and fidgets on the floor,
To the amusement of them all,
Who laugh'd till all their sides were sore.

And still the lovely lady gay,
In graceful air the measures led;
And still Lord Valens danc'd away,
And blither still the harper play'd.

" For pity, harper, hold thy hand,
Urg'd he, for I am out of breath;
Do let me for a moment stand,
Or I shall dance myself to death.'

Then down his harp the lyrist laid,
A winsome wight I wot was he,
And to the weary wanton said,
" This likes you more than chivalry.

" You see, Lord Valens, I have pow'r
To treat you in what wise I will;
But be assured that from this hour
I never more will use you ill.

" Your daughter, Baron, is my bride,
Right worthy of her rank, I ween;
And, understand, my Lord, beside,
That she is now an elfin queen!

" There, take, Lord Valens, take the sword;
T' may serve you on some future day;
This, haply, succour may afford,
When I, perhaps, am far away.

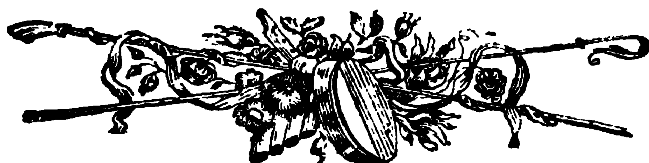
" But now and then depend that we
Will pay a visit to your hall;
And now may all prosperity
Attend you, till our casual call."

"Indeed, my son, (the Baron said,)
If so it be, it must be so;
And sorely have I been afraid,
To think what you resolv'd to do.

"And since my daughter is your wife,
Take my consent now frank and free;
And, thro' the residue of life,
In *God's* name may you happy be!"

Scarce had that word the Baron spoke,
When, in an instant, all was gone!
The hall, the banquet, and the folk,
Were vanish'd, and he left alone!

But, what surpris'd him yet still more
Than all the rest, was now to see,
Tho' he two days had rode full sore,
Close by his own park-wall was he!



THE FRIGHTFUL BEAUTY.

SIR Barnaby he was as courteous a knight
As ever liv'd north of the Trent;
For still he was call'd by the ladies so bright,
Sir Courteous, wherever he went.
King Henry the Eighth, into gay Cumberland,
An excursion once made for his sport;
With Lords and with Ladies, a fair sightly band,
The fairest perhaps in the court.
Awhile at Sir Barnaby's hall with delight
The King with his courtiers made stay;
Where dancing and music beguil'd ev'ry night,
And the joys of the chace ev'ry day.
It chanc'd that one night to partake of the ball,
A female incognita came;
But nobody there seem'd to know her at all,
Or could guess at her rank or her name.
The king danc'd the damsel around and around,
And press'd his addresses full sore;
But when all his gallantries useless were found,
He vow'd he would mind her no more.

Now there is, Sir Barnaby, (whisper'd the king,)
"A subject to practise your skill;
Perhaps to some terms the unknown you may bring,
At least you may try if you will."
Away to the fair one Sir Barnaby sped,"
Expectant of better success;
Determin'd to use all the wits in his head,
And practise his utmost address.
With kindness his warmest advances she met,
Her courtesy equall'd his own;
In gallantry fairly she kept him in debt,
For his spirits seem'd utterly gone.
"I'm thinking, fair Lady, (Sir Barnaby said,
As they wanton'd in amorous play,)
If haply I had such a lady in bed,
She should not come a damsel away."
"Indeed! (said the Lady, with smiling reply,)
You would make some poor virgin afraid;
But if, for a proof, she should venture to try,
Would you just be as good as you said?"
"Now, by the Lord Harry, (Sir Barnaby cried,)
If I were not as good as I've said,
I'd take the first woman I met for my bride,
So long as she has but a head."
"Your offer is knightly, (the Lady replied,)
But probation determines the whole;
Assertion has oft by the proof been belied,
And the best have come short of the goal."

The dancing continued, the goblet went round,
Good humour pervaded the hall;
Each bosom was cheer'd with sweet melody's sound,
The king and his merry men all.
At length it grew late, and the parties withdrew
Each one in their own proper way;
Sir Barnaby he all impatiently flew
To attend on the Lady so gay.
Towards her bedchamber so soft he did creep,
And so softly to bed went the knight;
But he scarcely was in, till he fell fast asleep,
And so loudly he snor'd all the night.
Sir Barnaby soon in the morning awoke,
And look'd—but his Lady was fled!
He mutter'd and fretted, but ne'er a word spoke,
And in anger he leap'd out of bed.
Quite frantic he star'd and he stampt round the room,
And he got in a terrible rage;
Like Stentor he call'd on young Gilbert his groom,
And as loudly he call'd on his page:
"O Gilbert, O Gilbert, why didst thou not wake,
Why didst thou not call me, I say?
That I might have rose, for the fair Lady's sake,
Ere she'd gone thus unguerdon'd away.
"Full loudly, my Lord, twice or thrice did I call,
To wake you, (re-answer'd the groom;)
But in vain did I hoot, and in vain did I bawl,
When the Lady went out of the room."

"And thou, little page, why didst thou not awake?
Or didst thou keep dozing till day?"
"I call'd you, my Lord, and I gave you a shake,
When the Lady was going away."
The King came up-stairs, and said to the knight,
"What has rais'd all this clamour, I pray?"
"My liege, I have slept with the Lady all night,
And she's now gone a maiden away!"
"Ungallant, ungallant! (the monarch replied,)
Default is as bad as a crime;
But since 'twill at present no better betide,
You must play better cards the next time."
"But, Sire, when my bargain you shall understand,
You'll say that full hard is my case;
I foolishly slipp'd all the trumps from my hand,
And my hazard is not worth an ace:
For, Sir, when the bargain with her I first set,
It was, if she rose up a maid,
I'd wed the first female that ever I met,
So be that she had but a head."
"I cannot absolve thee, (King Harry then said,)
The fault must thy own be confess'd;
And as thou hast let her away thus, a maid,
Of a bad bargain e'en make the best."
The King and his company went on the morn
To hunt on the forest so green;
The hunters loud hallo, the hounds and the horn,
Made a right merry chorus, I ween.

The morning was charming, serene was the sky,
The birds on the boughs sweetly sang;
The vallies, as if they partook of the joy,
With answering choruses rang.
Two hares from the covert at once took a start,
But soon sought the shelter again;
When just at that instant a fair bounding hart
Full swiftly flew over the plain.
"A fair happy presage, (exclaim'd the gay King,)
In such sports we but seldom excel;
If better from good thus progressively spring,
You, Sir Barnaby, yet may do well."
"Pray, whose is that chariot, (Sir Barnaby said,
To a page as he posted along;)
And who is the person within it convey'd,
And to whom do these servants belong?"
"Good sir, (said a page,) your enquiries forbear,
It belongs to a right wealthy dame;
No more we're allow'd, worthy knight, to declare,
Then seek not to find out her name."
"I must, and I will, (then Sir Barnaby cried,)
Then tell me the whole that you know;
I've sworn by my knighthood she shall be my bride,
King Harry has witness'd my vow."
"In sooth, (quoth the servant,) good tidings you speak,
You spare us much sorrow and strife;
My lady was just setting forward to seek
A fair knight that would make her his wife."

"'Tis well, (said the King,) you are happily met,
'Twere pity that soon you should part;
To me, good Sir Barnaby, you stand in debt,
For raising you such a sweet*heart*."
Then up rode the King to the side of the coach,
The servants saluted him round;
For each recollected him on his approach,
And they bow'd in obeisance profound.
But when brave Sir Barnaby came to behold
What sort of a bargain he'd got,
His head it grew giddy, his blood it ran cold,
And bitterly curs'd he his lot.
Her person was comely and fair to behold,
Her garments were costly and fine;
Her ornaments glisten'd with rubies and gold,
But her head was the head of a swine!
"Now, woe to thy promise, (said Harry the Eighth,)
Were I thee, I should want to be dead;
For if thou refuse her in marriage, thy fate
Is next morning to lose thine own head!"
"No, no, (said Sir Barnaby,) rather than life,
And all my estates throw away,
I'll wed her, and bed her, and make her my wife;
I can die, if I plea. e, the next day."
Then off went Sir Barnaby, courtiers, and all,
Along with this Lady so fair;
Until that they reach'd a magnificent hall,
With which there were few could compare.

Of houses and lands she had got a great store,
Her furniture was of the best;
She had full forty servants to tend her, or more,
And all were most sumptuously dress'd.
Each day, in a trough made of fair burnish'd gold,
The Lady on dainties was fed;
Each day in a chariot most stately she roll'd,
Slept at night in a fine velvet bed!
The nuptials were solemniz'd on the next day,
Rare justings and tourneys were there;
And numbers of Lords and of Ladies so gay,
To attend at this wedding so rare.
King Henry the head of the table he grac'd,
The Lady was on his right hand,
And close by his side was Sir Barnaby plac'd,
And around them a fair jolly band.
The music it play'd, and the goblet went round,
The whole were right merry I ween;
For never before, in all Christendom's ground,
Such a wedding, till now, had been seen.
The night it grew late, and the company broke,
Each one to his chamber was led;
Sir Barnaby lastly, to finish the joke,
Led his fair grumbling consort to bed!
And far on the couch, without one kind embrace,
He laid her, her head to the wall;
And close in the curtain he wrapp'd his own face,
Resolv'd not to touch her at all.

All night on his pillow he toss'd and he moan'd,
But sleep on his eye-lids ne'er press'd;
Nor once to the bride e'er the live-long night turn'd,
But wish'd her eternal good rest!
As soon as the goddess of morning arose,
Sir Barnaby rose from his bed:
In hasty confusion he put on his clothes,
And forth from the chamber he sped.
"O whither thus haste you, good Sir, (said the bride,)
O whither thus early? (she said;)
Twice all night with a damsel you've lain by your side,
And each morning have left her a maid!"
Sir Barnaby turn'd him around with surprise,
For she ne'er yet had spoken before;
And to any question, her constant replies
Were only a humph, and no more!
But more was his wonder on viewing the bride,
Whom he left in disgust as I ween,
When, lo! a most beautiful damsel he spied,
Where his grunter-fac'd lady had been.
"If you I've neglected, (Sir Barnaby said,)
'Twas because that my senses were stole,
But certes you shan't be much longer a maid,—
The third night shall pay for the whole.
But say, by the virgin, fair lady, (said he,)
Now what all those matters may mean;
Or how may this strange metamorphosis be?
Fair dame, 'tis most wond'rous, I ween.

"My step-mother was a mischievous old witch,
Who in cunning all others excell'd;
Who, knowing full well I should one day be rich,
Transform'd me, as you have beheld.
My own proper form, one short day in the year,
She had left me the pow'r to assume;
A monster the rest I was doom'd to appear,
Tho' I now am but just in my bloom.
All cruelly sentenc'd in this shocking plight,
To wear out the whole of my life;
But the spell was to cease if I met with a knight
That would take me and make me his wife."
King Harry the Eighth, with his gay gallant band,
Were assembled below in the hall;
Sir Barnaby went with his bride in his hand,
And presented her there to them all.
And truly Sir Barnaby there he rehears'd
The matter, just as it had pass'd;
"My soul! (said the King,) if you blunder'd at first,
You have made a good market at last."



ALLEN AND ELLEN.

FAIR Ellen she came to the Esk river side,
She wanted to pass, but no passage could view;
The water was deep, and the water was wide,
And much tho' she wanted, she durst not wade thro'.

Fair Ellen she look'd for the boatman full sore,
She look'd all around, but no boatman could see;
"Is nobody coming to carry me o'er,
Before either drown'd or benighted I be?"

At length looking wistfully round she espied
A little old man with his boat by the shore;
"O little old ferryman, (fair Ellen cried,)
O little old man, will you carry me o'er?"

"O where wouldst thou ferry to, Lady, so sweet,
O where wouldst thou ferry to, tell me, I pray?
The water is wide, and the water is deep;
I cannot cross over so late in the day."

"Why will you not ferry me over the stream,
  Why will you not ferry me, little old man?
I'll guerdon you double when danger's extreme;
  Then do, good old ferryman, do if you can."

"O where wouldst thou ferry to, Lady, so sweet,
  O where wouldst thou ferry to, tell me, I pray?
The water is wide, and the water is deep;
  I cannot cross over so late in the day."

"Then I will go leave thee, (fair Ellen she said,)
  No more will I ask thee, thou stingy old man;
The poor little ferryman down at Green Bed,
  I know he will carry me o'er if he can."

"O where wouldst thou ferry to, Lady so sweet,
  O where wouldst thou ferry to, tell me, I pray?
The water is wide, and the water is deep,
  I would not advise you to cross it to-day."

"O yes, I must cross it to-night if I can,
  The reasons are urgent that press upon me;
Then ferry me over, thou little old man,
  And treble thy guerdon, believe me, shall be."

"But, tell me, fair lady, what causes thy haste,
  The day is far spent, and the night coming on;
Thy reasons are urgent I doubt not the least,
  But speak them, fair lady, and I will be gone."

Fair Ellen she blush'd like the fair summer rose,
'Twas bashful confusion that crimson'd her cheek;
The reason she was not afraid to disclose,
But modesty solely forbade her to speak.

"Excuse virgin fondness, (the damsel replied,)
Tho' you'll blame my reasons, they're weighty with me:
Young Allen he promis'd to make me his bride;
To-morrow, to-morrow our wedding should be.

"He faithfully promis'd to meet me to-day,
I know him too well to dispute what he said;
But why he his coming so long should delay?
O boatman, O boatman, I'm sadly afraid!

"The river is deep, and the river is wide,
The fresh water furiously comes from above;
The sands they are bad, and full high runs the tide,
And much do I fear for the fate of my love."

"O Ellen, O Ellen, the ferryman cried,
Thy Allen now sleeps in a watery bed!
He never, no never, shall make thee his bride—
The cold waves of Solway run over his head!

"All faithful to thee, he set out from his home;
He came to the Esk, it was wide, it was deep;
He ventur'd—he there found a wat'ry tomb.
In Solway's foul sands doth thy lover now sleep!"

Fair Ellen she heard the old ferryman's tale;
Fair Ellen she heard, but she made no reply;
Her eyes they grew languid, her face it grew pale,
And ever and ever she heav'd the deep sigh.

She wistfully look'd where the boatman had stood,
She wistfully look'd, but the boatman was gone!
Before her she heard and beheld the fierce flood,
But she on its margin was standing alone.

All stupidly speechless she homeward return'd;
She rāv'd not, she spoke not, her grief was extreme;
Convuls'd was her face, but in silence she mourn'd,
As sadly she went by the side of the stream.

By fever and phrenzy throughout the next day,
The poor helpless Ellen was kept to her bed;
And, sighing full sore, she would frequently say
"The cold waves of Solway run over his head!"

"Thy Allen, all faithful, set out from his home,
He came to the Esk, it was wide, it was deep,
He ventur'd—he there found a wat'ry tomb—
In Solway's foul sands doth thy lover now sleep!

"Ah, curse on thy waters, thou proud running river,
Ah, curse on thy fountains and streams as they flow;
Those love had united thus ruthless to sever,
He's drown'd in thy waters, I'm drown'd in my woe.

"'Twas cruel in thee, thou black Esk, to detain
My Allen, my love, my husband, my life!
But I'll have him from thee, foul river, again;
I must, I have promis'd I will be his wife!

"Tho' Solway's cold waters run over his head,
What tho' my love lie in the midst of thy clay,
Tho' in thy foul sands be my poor Allen's bed,
Yet will I be with him, and with him I'll stay."

The fever, tho' strong, yet retir'd by degrees,
But her senses were gone, they return'd not again;
Her heart by recov'ry recover'd no ease,
And perfectly turn'd was the poor Ellen's brain.

Now oft would she rove by the deep river side;
Her sorrow was silent, none heard her complain,
Unless when saluting the wind or the tide,
And then she would call on her Allen in vain.

Whene'er the foul gull or the cormorant rose,
"Ah, yonder's my lover, (poor Ellen would cry,)
I'll follow my Allen wherever he goes;"
Then stretch out her arms in an effort to fly.

Along the smooth sands in distraction she'd run,
Crying—"Stop, cruel lover, nor leave me alone!
Why dost thou poor Ellen thus pitiless shun?"
When tir'd, she would weep when the object was gone.

"Ah, how couldst thou leave me, thus cruelly leave me?
Abandon thy Ellen to wailing and woe!
I never once thought that the youth would deceive me,
I never deceiv'd thee; ah! no, my love, no!

"O'er earth and o'er ocean impatient I'll fly,
On pinions full swiftly his course I'll pursue;
I know that my Allen has sought yonder sky,
The spirit of Ellen will wander there too."

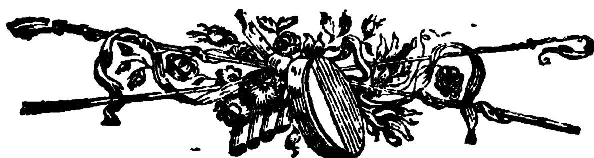
The waters of Eden were heavy and deep,
The winds they were howling, and dark was the day,
When Ellen, poor Ellen, stood high on the steep,
And ardently gaz'd on the gale-driven spray.

The foul hooting sea-gull arose from the wave,
The maniac beheld it and shriek'd out amain—
"O Allen, O Allen, thy Ellen now save!
And cruelly do not desert me again!"

The damsel observ'd not the place where she stood,
Her mind had, alas! other objects in view;
The precipice steep, and the black rolling flood,
The slightest attention from Ellen ne'er drew.

"Yes, yes, I am coming! (exclaim'd the fond maid,)
O Allen, why thus from thy love dost thou fly?
Yet, yet will I follow thee swiftly, (she said,)
On pinions as fleet, to yon fair shining sky."

So said—she sprang forward; but, ah! the deep river
Receiv'd her! the struggle of life was soon o'er;
A moment she scream'd, then was silent for ever,
And poor hapless Ellen was heard of no more!



THE

MOUNTAIN MANIAC.

HARK! the hoarse loud whirlwind howling!
See the light'ning's dazzling glare!
Hear the deaf'ning thunders rolling
Thro' the agitated air.

See, where mighty forests bending,
With their heads salute the ground,
Whilst their tortur'd branches rending,
O'er the waste are scatter'd round.

Hear yon cliff, by force stupendous,
Rifted from the mountain's brow;
Tumbling down, with crash tremendous,
To the hideous gulph below!

There the water-sprite loud yelling,
Mingles with the bellowing gale;
And wild Nature's chorus swelling,
Echoes loudly thro' the dale.

At a distance, hear old Ocean
  Furious dash th' obstructing shore,
And amidst the wild commotion,
  Raise a supersounding roar.

"Roar on, ye thunders! whirlwinds, louder howl!
Your's is the music that best suits my soul!
Not the vex'd ocean, nor the tortur'd wind
Endure a conflict equal to my mind!
Your conflicts sometimes cease—that in my breast
For ever rages, never finding rest!
Oh! I am sick! and my drain'd heart denies
Its kindly tears to cool my scorching eyes!

A fever fires my brain; congeals my blood!—
While I am more than mad with wild despair!
And, as beneath I hear the rushing flood,
I'm half resolv'd to calm the conflict there:
But, as if to perpetuate my care,
The cruel fates my purposes withstood;
I'm held by force in being, still to bear
Misfortune's scourge, and o'er those evils brood,
Which death alone can quiet and conclude!

I climb o'er the mountains! I plunge thro' the dale!
I am drench'd by the show'r—and am dried by
  the gale!
The rude blasts of winter unheeded I bear;
Keen hunger sustain, yet these cause not my care!

The anguish, deep-rooted, is fix'd in my heart,
And till that shall burst, I must suffer the smart."

"Who would believe that such excessive woe,
Would not have done the business long ago:
But surely mine of sorrows are the worst,
They petrify the heart that they should burst!
And, from the consequences of excess,
Instead of short'ning, lengthen my distress!"

But, see, the tempest 'gins to cease,
The battling elements at peace
Are hush'd into a calm serene,
And sweetly smiles the rural scene.
The soaring lark on quiv'ring wings,
To heav'n her raptur'd carol sings,
The azure vault, cerulian clear,
Bids nature's languid offspring cheer,
The gladd'ning summons pleas'd and gay,
Creation hastens to obey.
The hart his covert now forsakes,
Despising bow'rs and shelt'ring brakes;
And o'er the mountain bounds elate,
On daisied lawns to join his mate;
The sounding bittern quits the glen,
The snipe forsakes the marshy fen;
And all the children of the air
The common invitation share;
'Tis love the rising joy excites,
'Tis love that all the throng invites.

"Then may not I the cheerful concourse join?
  Shall love invite, and Oscar not obey?
Where is the passion that can equal mine;
  Which time nor absence can allay;
  But as it lives, grows stronger with each day!"

Down the mountain's sunny side
Swift I sweep, to bring my bride;
Saunt'ring in the verdant vale,
List'ning to the cuckoo's tale.
In the scented myrtle grove,
Sweetly sits my pensive love:

Whilst around their scents exhaling,
  Sweet the rose and woodbine blow,
With their od'rous breath regaling
  Julia, as she sits below.

Julia! blooming, beauteous maid!
Leave awhile the bow'ry shade;
Leave awhile thy soft recess,
And thy longing lover bless:
Leave awhile thy peaceful dreams,
Myrtles-shades, and murm'ring streams;
And with fond impatience haste,
All the joys of love to taste!

With what pleasure I'll behold thee,
With what rapture I'll enfold thee.

Haste then, Julia, come away,
This is Hymen's holiday:
Pleasure ev'ry sense delighting;
Haste then, Julia, come away,
For the season's most inviting.

On the blue-rob'd sun-gilt mountain
Will I make thy heathy bed;
By the side of yonder fountain,
There our banquet shall be spread.

Strains of love, in softest numbers,
On my dulcet pipes I'll play,
To provoke refreshing slumbers,
As I guard thee thro' the day.

But see, where all-blooming my Julia comes,
Her smiles are the op'ning of spring;
Her presence, all-lovely, my bosom re-cheers,
Fond transports revive, and dispell'd are my fears.
'Tis Julia alone could such extacy bring.

Then, come, my dear Julia, great nature's fair blossom;
Come, come, and recline thy dear head in my bosom.
The fond throbbing heart how with rapture 'tis beating,
To think on the pleasures of this happy meeting!

What makes thee linger thus, most lovely maid?
Randolph is dead! thou need'st not be afraid;
Ah, me! she shrieks!—the villain there behold,
With rude embrace my timid wife enfold!
"Unhand her, monster! or, by yonder heav'n!
Thou'rt in an instant to damnation driv'n!
'Twere better thou hadst never seen the light,
Than with this outrage to provoke my sight.
Beast! dost thou mock my anger? then, come on!
O God! O God! what has my fury done!
She bleeds! she falls!—perdition seize thy soul!
Death is too little for a crime so foul.

My rapier's point shall tap thy lustful blood,
To the extinction of the very heat
Which has inflam'd thee to this dev'lish deed.
Oh! I will launch thy soul before 't has time
To scream for mercy, or to sue for pardon,
And hurl it headlong to infernal hell!
There, there! begone to everlasting death!
And may thy soul as little mercy find,
Where I transmit thee, as I've shewn thee here!—
But, oh! my Julia! why so sadly mute?
The ruffian now is hush'd—and so art thou!—

Oh! I am madly mad, past all relief,
With indignation, love, and bursting grief:
Not all the tortures hell to guilt can deal,
Can parallel the torments that I feel!

O my poor Julia! O my lovely bride!
So soon, so sadly soon, thus torn away,
Would, would to heav'n, that I myself had died!
Ere I had seen this lamentable day.

O Julia, thy spirit that hovers around me,
Will pardon my rashness, and pity my grief,
Will pity those feelings that mortally wound me,
For whose keen endurance time brings no relief.
I'm wretched, I'm mad, I'm more than distracted,
To think on the sad cruel work I have acted,
Yet that which is over can ne'er be retracted,
Tho' mine with misfortunes may stand as the chief.

Ye thunders that roll thro' the sky,
Ye tempests that furiously blow,
Now bellow your loudest, and try
To make me forget all my woe.

Let earthquakes and deluges wage
Their warfare on nature each hour,
They could not exhibit my rage,
Were I but possess'd of their pow'r.

The tempest that ocean deforms,
The whirlwinds that ruffle the air,
Are not to compare with the storms
This bosom is destin'd to bear.

But ah, alas! where are my senses fled?
I've lost my wife, my hapless Julia's dead!
Blow, blow, ye winds! ye rifting tempests howl!
In showr's let heav'n's red thunderbolts be hurl'd!
Wild from their orbits let the planets roll,
And discompose the fabric of the world!
Tear up old ocean till the yellow sand
Work into foam, and on the surface stand!

But, hark! what voice is that I hear,
That midst the tumult strikes mine ear?
'Tis my Julia, lovely maid!
'Tis my Julia's mournful shade.
Touch'd in death with deep concern,
Hark! she bids me cease to mourn.
Gentle spirit, peace!—refrain—
Oscar shall be sooth'd again.

Yes, passion's storm is o'er! the furious blast
Subsides into a stupid calm at last.
Ah! gentle stranger, in thy wond'ring eyes,
I read at once thy pity and surprise:
Sit down, and hear the story of my woes,
Communication some relief bestows;
And this recital may, perhaps, in part,
Abate the surflux of my delug'd heart.

THE MANIAC's TALE.

NEAR where yon shady coppice spreads,
Deserted and forlorn,
The neat but humble cottage stands,
The place where I was born.

Where, thro' the spring-tide of my life,
The moments gaily flew;
And where uninterrupted joy
Full twenty years I knew.

The daughter of an honest swain,
Fair Julia, long I lov'd;
Nor long till kindly she confess'd
My passion she approv'd.

Increasing happiness and joy
To me each morning brought,
And, if true bliss man e'er possess'd,
'Twas mine, I vainly thought.

By Hymen soon our hands were join'd,
My utmost wishes crown'd;
And what most ardent love could hope,
Full realiz'd I found.

Bless'd with the chosen of my heart,
My Julia, lovely bride!
My happiness was so complete,
I had no wish beside.

But, oh! how little was the time
Those pleasures were to last!
But one short week—fell ruin came,
That blessedness to blast!

It chanc'd that on a sultry day,
To seek the cooling shade,
My Julia to the copse, alone,
Had negligently stray'd,

Sir Randolph, he, the haughty Lord
Of all this vast domain,
Had long seduction's basest arts
On Julia tried in vain.

He met her in the lonely shade,
He there resolv'd amain,
By violence to win the prize
He might not else obtain.

Alarm'd—the fair one scream'd aloud!
I heard—my sword I drew;
And, wing'd with fondness, thro' the grove
To her assistance flew.

I, in an instant, reach'd the place,
And there my Julia found
All breathless, struggling in his arms,
And sinking to the ground!

"Turn, villain, turn! enrag'd, (I cried,)
And yield thy forfeit life;
Nor with impunity expect
To violate my wife."

As the fierce lioness who views
Her whelps by hunters torn,
So rush'd I to the fatal place,
With jealous fury borne

With foul confusion in his looks,
My rage the villain saw;
And, tho' he scorn'd inglorious flight,
He had no time to draw.

But, as with more than mortal ire,
I madly onward press'd,
He turn'd my Julia to my sword,
Which stabb'd her lovely breast!

If keenest pangs of jealous hate
My bosom rent before;
Yet, to behold this cruel scene,
Inflam'd me ten times more.

I madly bellow'd with my rage,
The cause was surely great;
And tho' I took Sir Randolph's life,
Revenge felt incomplete!

I pierc'd his body thro' and thro',
Remorse my heart had none;
For, oh! my Julia, lovely bride!
She was for ever gone!

O heav'ns! what anguish then was mine!
Revenge had done its worst;
Tho' late the happiest of mankind,
I now was doubly curs'd.

A whirling phrenzy seiz'd my brain,
Strange shadows dimm'd my sight!
My burning eyes refus'd to flow,
And reason left me quite.

The bleeding bodies from the place
I madly dragg'd away;
And in that grave, dug by these hands,
Now lies my Julia's clay.

Expos'd upon the mountain's side
Sir Randolph's carcase lies;
On his detested corse I yet
Can glut my vengeful eyes!

And here I range the forest wild,
Unwistful of relief!
Assur'd no hand, but that of death,
Can mitigate my grief.



MARION MACKYE.



BUT lately I pass'd by the heath cover'd hill,
Near the road where the traveller oft sees
The poor hapless maniac, who, seated there still,
On the green grassy bank, be the gale hot or chill,
Responsively sighs to the breeze.

Observe her shrunk eyes, how distracted they stare,
And how blanch'd are her cheeks by her woe;
Her garments are rent, and her bosom is bare,
Her ringlets neglectedly float in the air,
And she hoots at the winds as they blow.

Yet beauty once sat on that now sallow cheek,
Soft lustre illumin'd her eye;
Keen sense fir'd that heart, that's now ready to break,
And the neighbours extol, as they frequently speak
Of the charms of poor Marion Mackye.

Young Andrew she lov'd, nor unheeded her flame,
The youth was as tender as true;
One soul seem'd in both ev'ry passion to frame,
Their prospects, their hopes, and their fears, were the same,
And in both mutual sympathy grew.

A mariner he, o'er the boist'rous main,
Sought his fortune in many a clime;
Whilst she watch'd her flocks o'er the wide-spreading plain,
Endear'd to each nymph, and admir'd by each swain,
For Marion was just in her prime.

A contract of marriage they mutually swore,
But, in hopes their poor stock to improve,
He thought he would trust to the billows once more,
By one lucky voy'ge to mend his little store,
Then return, and be bless'd with his love.

The canvas unfurl'd, soon the bark she set sail;
Serene was the face of the main;
The winds were auspicious, quite steady the gale,
And fate with success seem'd their passage to hail,
And the crew with their prospect were fain.

The eyes of young Marion the vessel pursu'd
As far as one speck could be seen;
But when the dear object no longer she view'd,
The fast-falling tears her fair bosom bedew'd,
And she sank, 'midst her griefs, on the green.

The neighbours the maid gently bore to her bow'r,
Kindly seeking to comfort her woes;
But e'en from the morn till the midnight sad hour
Her eyes appear'd delug'd with one ceaseless show'r,
And Marion seem'd lost to repose.

Tho' storms may perplex the vast depths of the main,
And Nature's fair aspect deform;
Yet but for a period the conflict can reign,
Serenity, time shall restore us again,
And a calm still succeeds to a storm.

Thus Marion, poor girl! tho' she languish'd awhile
In all the excess of despair,
By degrees grew more tranquil, a hope-aiding smile
Illumin'd her eye, her sad heart to beguile,
And serenity mix'd in her air.

Yet constant at ev'ning, when bus'ness was o'er,
And day from the west 'gan to part,
Impatient she'd haste her away to the shore,
There over the ocean would anxiously pore,
Sigh and pray for the youth of her heart!

At length came the news that the bark, homeward bound,
Was fast nearing the long wish'd-for port;
What raptures the bosom of Marion now found!
Her wishes and pray'rs with success seem'd all crown'd,
And no longer of fortune the sport.

Three whole tedious days at the haven she staid,
In hopes their arrival to hail;
Each noise that she heard—"They're now coming," she said,
In each passing tar her dear Andrew survey'd,
And their vessel in each passing sail.

The fourth morning came, but with it came the news,
Ship and crew had all founder'd at sea;
The shock all the reason of Marion subdues,
Of cruelty heav'n she dares to accuse,
And her wits are quite wander'd away.

The corpse of her true love, by one kindly wave
Was wash'd up, with two or three more;
A burial, in pity, the peasantry gave,
And all were together interr'd in one grave,
On a hillock that's close to the shore.

Here seated she'll sob all the summer day long,
E'en in winter, be foul or be fair;
Unheeding the traveller that passes along,
Claps her hands at the birds as they carol their song,
Claps her hands, tho' there be not one there.

Or sometimes, perchance, to the beach she may roam,
On the sad cruel billows to stare;
There oft, in her phrenzy, find Andrew come home,
Or see him wild riding upon the white foam,
Then again sink to gloomy despair.

But lately I pass'd her, sat on the green grave;
I spoke, but she made no reply;
Her hands she kept smiting, but gave me a waive,
As much as to say, I but solitude crave,
"And that, (I exclaim'd,) hapless maid, thou shalt have!"
As she sigh'd out—"Poor Marion Mackye."

THE

CRUEL HUNTSMAN.

ARGUMENT.

The following Story is founded on a relation of an apparition once very famous, and equally troublesome, in the neighbourhood of Wigton, in Cumberland. The manner, with many of the circumstances, it must be confessed, have a striking resemblance to one of the stories in the Decameron of Boccace, translated by Mr. Dryden, in his tale of "Theodore and Honore."

LONG o'er moss and moorland dreary,
Plunging slow, in piteous plight,
Cuthbert wander'd, wet and weary,
Lost amid the gloom of night.

Not one ray the desert bright'ning,
To direct him thro' the maze;
Save by turns the gleaming light'ning,
With its transitory blaze.

Loud and hoarse the winds were howling
Thro' the circumjacent woods;
At a distance headlong rolling,
Waver* pour'd its furious floods.

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* Waver, a river near Wigton.

Each advance evinc'd new danger,
Tho' with caution he proceeds ;
Yet the weary 'wilder'd stranger,
Wists not where his journey leads.

Onward still, with anxious toiling,
Doth he thro' the quagmire plode,
Hoping chance and sore turmoiling
May direct him to the road.

But at length, still more entangled
In the close impervious wood,
With his feet all maim'd and mangled
Quite irresolute he stood.

Pitchy darkness all surrounding,
Fill'd him with unwonted fears ;
And the tempests roar confounding,
Deaf'ning, thunder'd in his ears.

Tho' with toil and terror harass'd,
Tho' inclement was the night,
He resolves within the forest
To await the morning light.

Long in this dejected languor
Hapless Cuthbert had not stood,
When he heard a hell-like clangour
Loud resounding thro' the wood.

Shrill the huntsman's bugle winding,
  Thro' the gloomy forest sounds;
And, as if their prey now finding,
  Loudly yelp'd the clam'rous hounds.

Shouts of rage and indignation
  Verberated thro' the air;
And, as if in supplication,
  Shriek'd the voice of sad despair.

Nearer seem'd the sound advancing,
  Cuthbert heard them with surprise;
And athwart the forest glancing,
  Num'rous torches struck his eyes!

And, anon, full swiftly speeding,
  Fast a female figure flew,
Naked, mangled, breathless, bleeding!—
  Whom the dogs as fast pursue.

Close behind a figure follow'd,
  Helm'd and harness'd as a knight,
Who with dreadful menace hallo'd
  To the female in her flight.

Sable was the steed he drifted,
  Sable were the arms he wore;
In one hand a sword uplifted,
  Whilst a scourge the other bore.

This in wrath full oft resounded
On the female's back and sides;
And her tender limbs sore wounded,
Scatter'd fast their crimson tides.

Whilst her undefended haunches
Oft the dogs remorseless tore,
And the shrubs and neighb'ring branches
Were besprinkled with her gore.

Madly with her anguish roaring,
Shrieking many a piteous yell,
And for mercy loud imploring,
Down at Cuthbert's feet she fell!

Whilst the fell pursuer urging
Forward on his coal-black steed,
The poor victim still kept scourging,
Nor for aught might pity plead.

For awhile she seem'd to languish
With the pangs of parting breath!
But o'ercome with pain and anguish,
Silent!—hush'd!—she lay in death!—

He, the knight, whose fiend-like malice,
E'en to death his fury press'd,
Now to all compassion callous,
Thrust his faulchion thro' her breast!

Rouz'd with gen'rous indignation
At the cruel sanguine sight,
Cuthbert, with an imprecation,
Thus address'd the sable knight:—

" Stranger, say, with guise uncommon,
Doth this well with knighthood suit;
Thus a feeble helpless woman
Cruelly to persecute?

" Thus impetuously to urge her
Thro' the forest's ample bounds;
Thus inhumanly to scourge her,
And to tear her with thy hounds?"

" Let amazement have suspension,
Check thy anger, (said the knight,)
Far beyond thy comprehension
Are the things before thy sight.

" Of this work, but little weening,
Do not hastily decide;
Charitable tho' thy meaning,
Mercy may be misapplied.

" Little knowest thou th' occasion
Of this treatment thought severe;
Less the fatal ordination
That compels me to be here.

" But as pity prompts thine error,
Prejudice awhile forego ;
Rage suspend, and banish terror,
Listen, and my story know.

" Haply, hearing my narration,
Chang'd thy sentiments may be ;
And a share of thy compassion
Kindly may extend to me.

" All those lands that round are scatter'd.
Once confess'd me as their lord,
Then was I caress'd and flatter'd,
Num'rous vassals own'd my word.

" Gen'rous, liberal in my nature,
Affluence procur'd me fame ;
Comely form'd, and tall in stature ;—
Alvin, stranger, is my name.

" Happy quite, if worldly treasure
E'er could happiness bestow ;
But 'tis seldom perfect pleasure
Can from fortune's favours flow.

" In those days when softest passions
Steal upon the tender mind ;
When of love the first impressions
Entrance to our bosoms find;

" Then it was that at her window,
Gaily standing on a day,
First I saw the fair Lucinda,
And she stole my heart away.

" All the arts that love makes use of,
Now I tried with fondest care;
Presents, pray'rs, alike profuse of,
All to gain the lovely fair.

" She, although her love confessing,
Yielded to become my wife;
And, possess'd of such a blessing,
Happy seem'd my future life.

" Then it was I lov'd her dearly,
And her ev'ry word believ'd;
Hoping she lov'd as sincerely;
But how sore was I deceiv'd!

" Yet, amid this fond delusion,
On which all my hopes were built,
Soon I found, to my confusion,
All was perfidy and guilt.

" Bred midst scenes of rural pleasure,
Frequent in a country place,
All my intervals of leisure
Were devoted to the chace.

" In a fair autumnal morning,
  Tir'd with sport and sylvan play,
Home I chanc'd to be returning
  Ere my wonted time of day.

" But not with Lucinda meeting,
  As was usual, in the hall,
To salute with kindly greeting
  My return, I mus'd withal.

" Of the vassals then demanding
  Where their Lady had withdrawn,
One, who by my side was standing,
  Told me she was on the lawn.

" To the lawn with speed I hasted,
  Careful trac'd the park around;
But enquiry here was wasted,
  No Lucinda could be found!

" In my garden next I sought her;
  Ah! that sad, that fearful hour!
With a stranger there I caught her,
  Basely fondling in the bow'r!

" On his breast her head reclining,
  Whilst his arms embrac'd my wife!
At her fate she loud repining,
  Cursing too the marriage life!

"This was not an hour for chiding,
Who would then have patience left?
Frantic grown, beyond all biding,
And of reason quite bereft,

"From its sheath my vengeful hanger
Suddenly enrag'd I drew;
And, with more than mortal anger,
Madly run the traitor thro'.

"She, without reply or speaking,
Wrung her hands, and tore her hair,
And with frantic fury shrieking,
Seem'd to rend the very air.

"Tho' till now I lov'd her dearly,
Lov'd her!—yes, I must confess;
Yet I beat her now severely;
And what husband could do less?

"Silently my blows sustaining,
Still she answer'd not a word;
But her liberty regaining,
Instantly snatch'd up my sword!

"Unsuspecting her intention,
With my fury quite oppress'd,
Ere a moment's intervention,
With its point she pierc'd my breast!

" Thus of life this wretch depriv'd me,
Unrepented—unprepar'd!
Tho' herself not long surviv'd me,
Ere an equal fate she shar'd.

" On yon lake one ev'ning sailing,
Where I oft had pleasure found;
She, by chance her footing failing,
Tumbled over, and was drown'd!

" Since that time my rueful sentence
Is, when daylight disappears,
As I died without repentance,
Here to range a thousand years!

" And each year without abatement,
For her treason so impure,
What you thought such cruel treatment,
I must act, and she endure!

" Full one hundred years are pass'd of,
Since this direful work began,
And nine hundred more still last of
Our award, ere all is done!

" Save one of the holy dyat,
By kind charity impress'd,
Shall, by pray'r, reverse the fiat,
And my spirit send to rest.

"But the grey-ey'd glimpse of twilight,
And the shrill-voic'd bird of day,
Now proclaim'd that it was nigh light,
As the shades wore fast away."

In a moment all was silent,
Fast the beams of morning spread;
And the storm, so loud and vi'lent,
Hush'd, as fast the vision fled!

Homeward, sore dismay'd and frighted,
Cuthbert hied him o'er the green;
And to gaping crowds recited
All the wonders he had seen.

Long throughout the forest raging,
On that night, says legend-fame,
With a wrath, time not assuaging,
Alvin chas'd the woeful dame.

Till at length a holy brother
Of the neighb'ring convent heard,
By complaints from one and other,
How the country Alvin fear'd.

Deeming it a work of merit
His quietus to restore,
Exorcis'd the troubled spirit,
Who was never heard of more!

THE

MYSTERIOUS VISITOR.

'TWAS near to Strivlen* on a night,
Sir Simon with his legion lay,
The midnight moon she beam'd more bright,
Than beam'd his hopes of coming day.

The centinels were on the watch,
Caernarvon's spreading camps around;
Whilst some, o'ertoil'd, were fain to snatch
A moment's slumber on the ground.

No echo floated on the blast,
The hour was silent as the grave;
Save where the soldiers, as they pass'd,
The counter-sign alternate gave.

Sir Simon from his slumber woke,
He started up in wild surprise;
He thought he heard a voice which spoke,
And said—Sir Simon, haste, arise!"

* Strivlen, an old name for Stirling.

The moon, a sort of scanty glare,
T' illume his darksome tent supplied;
He thought he kenn'd a lady fair,
All shiv'ring stand by his bed-side.

Lie to the wall! thou baron brave;
Lie to wall, make room for me!
A lady lorne doth shelter crave,
And she would sleep to-night with thee.

Sir Simon was a worthy wight,
And eke as fam'd for gallantry;
Nor was there a more courteous knight
Than him in all the North country.

Come to my couch, thou lady fair,
To shelter thee, am I right fain;
My pallet, welcome, shalt thou share,
Thou art so like my Lady Jane.

Sir Knight, hast thou a Lady Jane?
If so, I may not sleep with thee;
No; I must wander on again,
And for some other shelter see.

Yes; Lady Jane she is my wife,
But she is now far, far away;
Then turn thee in, my dearest life,
And shelter till the dawn of day.

Didst thou e'er love thy Lady Jane,
  Didst thou e'er doat upon her charms,
Didst thou e'er feel a moment's pain
  When she was absent from thy arms?

Yes, I have lov'd my Lady Jane;
  Yes, I have doated on her charms;
And I have felt a peerless pain
  When she was absent from my arms.

Then how canst thou, Sir Simon, say,
  (If thou hast lov'd as thou hast said,)
Thus take another lady gay
  To be a partner in thy bed?

Yes, yes, my love I must avow,
  Still Lady Jane is dear to me,
But so alike to her art thou,
  It is not strange I fancy thee.

Thy shape, thy features, all conspire
  To make me love thee, lovely dame;
Thy gait, thy gestures, and attire,
  Thy voice, is just the very same.

Then come to bed, sweet lady fair,
  To shelter thee am I right fain;
My pallet thou shalt freely share,
  Thou art so like my Lady Jane.

Now, she's pull'd off her scarf and gown,
And stript her to the very skin;
And gaily turn'd the bed-clothes down,
And gaily has she tumbled in.

But strangely felt Sir Simon's heart,
A senseless stupor seiz'd his head;
A death-like coldness numb'd each part,
As his fair consort came to bed;

And strange sensations fill'd his mind,
And oft and sore he gasp'd for breath,
Nor rest nor pleasure could he find,
For still he felt cold,—cold as death.

And chilly, chilly all the night,
He listless past the hours away;
But ne'er once turn'd (nor sought delight)
Towards the lady where she lay.

At length appear'd the glimm'ring dawn,
Things more distinct he 'gan to ken,
The strange one from his side was gone,
Had left him—but he knew not when.

Now, by my sooth, Sir Simon said,
This is an accident most rare;
All night I've slumber'd by a maid,
And slighted her;—a lady fair.

How must the damsel me despise,
How much my gallantry disdain;
But had I her in such a wise,
She should not serve me so again.

Next day the proud embattled hosts
Menace in combat to engage;
But all their threat'nings and their boasts
Blow off with vaunts and useless rage.

Again the hour of midnight came,
The moon her wonted splendour wore;
Again the fair mysterious dame
Appear'd as she had done before.

And, as upon the former night,
The lady went to bed, I ween;
And, long before the morning light,
She left Sir Simon's side unseen.

Whatever sot behav'd like me!
(Sir Simon with a vengeance said;)
Twice has the damsel come right free,
And twice hath gone away a maid.

The third night came, the am'rous knight
Expectant of the lady lay;
Again she came, in beauty bright,
And lay with him till it was day.

But cold, and colder all the night
  The heart of sad Sir Simon grew;
And he was in such rueful plight,
  That how it chanc'd he never knew.

Now he hath call'd his trusty squire,
  And unto him hath sternly said;
Did I not, sot! of thee require
  To watch me well this mystic maid?

My lord, I watch'd the live-long night,
  Unslumb'ring, till the dawn of day,
But neither lady brown, or bright,
  E'er challeng'd me, or went my way.

Now verily, Sir Simon said,
  My mind misgives me; and, I fear,
Instead of this suppos'd fair maid,
  Some elfin harlot has been here;

If so, her visit bodes no good;
  I would to heav'n the day were o'er!
All night my dreams have been of blood,
  And they have troubled me right sore.

But now the crimson-mantled east
  Its blushing curtains had withdrawn;
The swagg'ring shadows fast decreas'd,
  That towr'd along the western lawn.

The harsh-voic'd trumpets 'gan to blow,
The squadrons for the fight prepare;
To Bannockbourne, in order slow,
They march to meet the kindling war.

Down from the heights of Strivlen fast
The Caledonian legions pour;
A sudden gloom the heav'ns o'ercast,
And ominous appear'd the hour.

The hostile armies soon engage,
Wild uproar rages o'er the plain;
Fell ruin spreads with deadly rage;
And thousands are by thousands slain

Proud Edward's num'rous vaunting host
To patriotic valour yield,
And, maugre all their former boast,
By flight inglorious quit the field.

Sir Simon in the mingled fight
Receiv'd a deep and dang'rous wound;
Which render'd him unfit for flight,
And left him helpless on the ground.

Towards a neighb'ring clump of trees,
With mangled limbs he crawl'd along;
At least to lie with greater ease,
And to avoid the passing throng.

All on a mossy bank he lay,
  Writhing with pain, besmear'd with gore;
When, lo, he saw the lady gay
  Whom he had seen the night before.

Why, how now! brave Sir Simon, say,
  What brings thee here in such a plight?
Ill suits the sadness of to-day,
  The gallantries of yesternight.

Ah! cruel lady, leave me now;
  Thy presence hath increas'd my pain;
I only sinn'd in thought; 'twas thou
  Didst challenge me to guilt in vain.

Oh! do not mock me in my grief,
  Upon the very verge of death;
'Twere better thou hadst brought relief,
  For I am sick, and pant for breath.

I would not mock thee in thy grief,
  Upon the very verge of death;
No, I would rather bring relief
  When thou art sick, and pant'st for breath.

But why, Sir Knight, wouldst thou reply,
  Now conscience checks thee from within,
That thou art guiltless, and 'twas I
  Who tempted thee to carnal sin?

Didst thou not tease me might and main,
  And ceaseless protestations make;
I was so like thy Lady Jane,
  That thou didst love me for her sake?

Didst thou e'er love thy Lady Jane,
  Didst thou e'er doat upon her charms;
Didst thou e'er feel a moment's pain
  When she was absent from thy arms?

Oh! that my Lady Jane were here,
  Oh! that she saw my woeful plight,
I wot no labour would she spare,
  But take me to her arms to-night.

Sir Knight, thy Lady Jane is here
  Full well she sees thy woeful plight;
I wot no labour will she spare,
  But take thee to her arms to-night.

Thy Lady Jane she lov'd thee well,
  Thy Lady Jane was ever true;
A victim to her love she fell,
  Sir Simon, yes, for love of you!

Disconsolate—a widow'd bride;
  Your absence she bewail'd full sore;
But when two months were pass'd, she cried,
  "This anguish I'll endure no more!

"But I will go and seek my Lord,
Betide what fortune will to me;
Since solitude can nought afford
But pain and pensive misery."

Unable with her griefs to cope,
Straight to the nearest port went she;
And there embark'd, in eager hope
Ere long her much-lov'd Lord to see.

But as towards the foaming Forth
The tott'ring vessel onward stood,
A tempest from the hostile North
Deep sunk them in the furious flood.

There deep in death sleeps Lady Jane,
Her eyes no more shall view the light;
Then hear, Sir Simon, once again,
For thou shalt sleep with her to-night!

So said,—the spirit, soft as air,
Evanish'd quickly from his side!
Sir Simon rais'd a ghastly stare—
Then clos'd his languid eyes, and died!



THE FRATRICIDE.

ARGUMENT.

THE following Ballad is taken from one in Dr. Piercy's collection, called "Edward, Edward." I remember to have heard another old set of this song, which seems, in my opinion, to be more ancient than that of he Bishop's. It began thus—

O where gott'st thou that bloody sword,
Son Davy, son Davy, &c. &c.

The tenor and equivoques of both were nearly the same, except the catastrophe, in which one confesses the blood to be that of his brother, whom he had killed in a passion, for plucking a young willow,

"Which might have been a tree."

The other avows it to be the blood of his father, and curses his mother's evil counsels for having been the virtual cause of the horrid consequences. As the sequels of both are very unsatisfactory, I have thought proper to assign a more probable reason for the fatal rencontre; which, in my opinion, is preferable to the original, which ever it be.

"WHY looks my son so ghastly pale,
Why shakes he thus with fear;
Why stands he mute—what can he ail?
O tell thy mother dear!

"Yes, tell me, Godfrey, on thy word,
Whence comes that dripping brand?
Why reeking yet appears thy sword,
And whence that bloody hand?"

"O mother dear! what needs this fear;
What causes this alarm?
The blood which you discover here,
Need indicate no harm.

"In Inglewood I chanc'd to spy
Some sport upon the plain;
My falcon he refus'd to fly—
I wrung his neck in twain!"

"O son, O son! to heav'n I would
'Twere sooth as thou hast said;
But certes, Godfrey, thy hawk's blood
Was never half so red."

"O lady mother, trust thy son,
When he the truth shall tell;
My greyhound he refus'd to run,
And by my sword he fell!"

"O son, O son! to heav'n I would
'Twere sooth as thou hast said;
But certes, Godfrey, thy hound's blood
Was never half so red."

"O Lady fair! dispel your care,
When I the truth shall tell;
This morning, as I chas'd a hare,
Full fast on Barrock Fell;

"My good grey mare she restive grew,
Just as I made my start;
Enrag'd, my angry sword I drew
And stabb'd her thro' the heart!

"She was my father's favourite, aye,
With care right costly bred;
But what will now Sir Prosper say,
To find that she is dead?"

"O son, O son! to heaven I would
'Twere sooth as thou hast said;
But certes, Godfrey, thy mare's blood
Was never half so red.

"O tell me, Godfrey, on thy word,
Whence comes that dripping brand?
Why reeking yet appears thy sword,
And whence that bloody hand?"

"O mother dear, 'tis meet I should,
(T'equivocate is vain;)
It is my brother Gilferd's blood,
By me untimely slain!"

"O say, when hell this purpose plann'd,
What demon strew'd the strife,
That thou should'st thus, with murd'ring hand
Destroy thy brother's life?

" Was it for this, all-gracious heav'n !
  That I two sons have borne ?
That children have to me been giv'n,
  To make me more forlorn ?

" O sure it is a doleful day,
  A doleful one to me ;
That one should thus his brother slay,
  And hang'd himself must be !"

" O mother, 'twas a bitter cause
  That urg'd this bitter deed ;
That made me break thro' Nature's laws-
  That made my brother bleed !

" My Emma—she, my married wife,
  Whom I so dearly lov'd ;
She, whom I valu'd more than life,
  Inconstant she has prov'd !

" But, oh ! the agonizing tale,
  It rends my heart anew ;
And it but ekes unto my bale,
  Her baseness to review.

" Returning from the morning chace,
  The harlot did I see
Within my brother's lewd embrace,
  All-yielding as might be !

"With anger, no one might assuage,
To view such foul disgrace;
And mad with jealousy and rage,
I rush'd unto the place.

To punish their unseemly lust
My sword in haste I drew,
And, with one furious mortal thrust,
Ran both their bodies thro'!

"Then from the fatal galling scene
In haste did I recede,
For common justice, as I ween,
Will hunt me with all speed.

"Oh! but it is a bitter blow,
And death were sweet to me;
But that, alas! if seiz'd, I know
That death were on a tree!

"And how would you, my mother dear,
Support the lasting shame?
Or how the public curses hear,
Mix'd with thy Godfrey's name?

"No! to the Highlands I will hie,
In solitude I'll mourn;
Unpitied live—unheeded die—
But never more return!"

THE PILGRIM.

SLOW from the marsh the lowing kine,
The barefoot herdsman homeward drove;
Faint gleam'd, athwart the distant Frith,
The sun, as day with darkness strove;

Sweet, from the steeple's summit grey,
His ev'ning song the starling sung;
And homewards drawling to his task,
With listless looks the school-boy slung;

When Lady Alice left her hall,
Her bosom rent with anxious care,
And walk'd towards the babbling brook,
To breathe awhile the fresh'ning air.

And, as she mournful mus'd along,
The tears oft trickling from her eye,
There slowly winding up the way,
A weary palmer did she spy.

All venerable was his mein,
Tho' tatter'd were the weeds he wore,
But falt'ring seem'd his step, and slow,
And as he went he sigh'd full sore.

"O Lady fair, some alms bestow,
(The bending suppliant humbly said,)
O Lady fair, some alms bestow,
By heav'n the boon shall be repaid;

"For I am fainting with fatigue
And wand'ring thro' the live-long day;
And weak and feeble are my limbs;
Then have some pity, Lady, pray."

"What are the alms that thou would'st ask?
What is the boon that thou wouldst crave?
What I may properly bestow,
That, pilgrim, freely shalt thou have."

"I'd take a morsel of your bread,
I'd take a little of your beer;
And, Lady, too, with your fair leave,
I'd ask for one night's lodging here."

"Most rev'rend friend, (fair Alice said,)
Right welcome is what you request,
And even longer, if you choose,
May you remain and take your rest."

"Thanks! Lady fair, (the palmer cried,)
Well guerdon'd may this goodness be;
For, since I left fair Palestine,
I have not seen such courtesy."

" Say, father, (cried the courteous dame
Impatiently,) and hast thou been
Of late on Syria's fatal shores,
Or there the Christian armies seen?

" Lord Maurice, he for whom I sigh,
With thousands there now risks his life;
His absence three long tedious years
I've sadly wept, a widow'd wife!

" Fain would I of my husband hear,
That gen'rous Lord for whom I mourn;
Fain would I of his welfare know,
But fainer still of his return."

" Dry up your tears, good Lady fair,
Yet happier days expect to see;
Dry up your tears, for know that I
Have welcome tidings brought for thee.

" Lord Maurice, him for whom you mourn;
Fair Lady, him full well I know;
Oft have I seen him in the camp,
Oft seen him combat with the foe.

" His ceaseless fondness for his wife,
Oft have I heard him weeping tell;
But for thy consolation know,
Lord Maurice is alive and well.

"Nor long, fair Lady, shall you weep,
Thus, widow-like, your wasting charms,
But very soon expect to hold
Your long-lost husband in your arms."

"Thanks, gentle pilgrim, for thy news;
In sooth, right welcome news to me;
And, if my heart be light to-day,
To-morrow thine shall lighter be.

"But tell me, father, to what chance
This strange intelligence you owe,
Or that my Lord will come so soon,
Pray tell me, stranger, how you know?"

"Tir'd with the unsuccessful war,
And long delays, the Christian host,
On board of their respective ships,
Have left the hostile Syrian coast.

"Already in their various ports
The English squadrons safely ride;
And soon, I ween, Lord Maurice will
Be here, whatever should betide."

"Now hast thou made my heart right glad,
(Fair Alice to the palmer said,)
And, in proportion to my joy,
Thy welcome tale shall be repaid.

"Then turn thee, pilgrim, to the hall,
There bathe and wash thy weary feet;
Thy journey's ended—and 'tis said,
That labour makes repose more sweet.'

And she has ta'en the palmer's arm,
And kindly led him to the hall;
The change in fair Alicia's face
Was notic'd by the servants all.

And he has with the Lady sat,
And there on costliest viands far'd;
And to repose his weary limbs,
The softest couch has been prepar'd.

The banquet done, the way-worn guest
A servant gently leads to bed,
With pillows made of softest down,
Whereon to rest his aching head.

And Lady Alice, from the hall,
Has lightly to her chamber gone;
But restless thro' the live-long night,
Or sleep or slumber found she none.

But, as with watchful eye she lay,
Her face towards the chamber door,
She thought she saw Lord Maurice glide,
All lightly arm'd, across the floor!

Her throbbing heart beat high with fear;
Chill horror check'd life's circling tide;
But, ere she might for mercy call,
The bursting doors flew open wide.

Three ruffians enter'd, in whose looks
Might well be seen their purpose foul;
Fair Alice mark'd their fell approach
In all the agony of soul.

As they advanc'd, she shriek'd aloud,
Uncertain of her pending doom;
When, lo! from t'other side was seen
The pilgrim rushing thro' the room!

"Hence, hell-hounds, fly! (he sternly cried,)
And save your lives, ere 'tis too late,
Nor this fair Lady's soft repose
Thus impious dare to violate!"

"Go to, thou silly palmer, go!
What brings thee here, old dotard, say?
Get to thy crucifix and beads,
Get to thy couch again, and pray!"

"Get thou to hell! (the palmer cried,)
I'll teach thee to repent thy scorn;
For, by the holy cross I swear!
'Twere better thou hadst ne'er been born!"

So said—he grasp'd him by the side,
The yielding flesh his fingers tore;
The tortur'd villain yell'd aloud,—
His entrails fell upon the floor!

Then in his arms the next he seiz'd,
And thro' the window dash'd him strait!
Hurl'd like a thunder-bolt, he fell,
And in the area finds his fate!

The third, who seem'd to be the chief,
Affrighted, and surpris'd to view
His comrades' fate, with kindling rage,
In haste his threat'ning rapier drew.

"Thou draw'st in vain, (the pilgrim cried,)
That sword thy life but ill defends;
Give up thy weapon and thyself,
Or here at once thy being ends!"

Enrag'd, the villain onward press'd,
With aspect fierce and ruffian mein;
The palmer strait his blade unsheath'd,
Which hitherto he'd kept unseen.

Then at the villain aim'd a blow,
That armour vainly might resist;
The guiltless sword forsook the hand,
The sever'd hand forsook the wrist!

At once confounded and dismay'd,
To be thus foil'd in such a strife,
The vanquish'd bravo on his knees,
In suppliant terms now begs his life.

" Live, and be hang'd! for that's thy fate,
(The pilgrim knight all sternly said;)
This failure has a bitter price
For all thy former follies paid.

" I heard your consultations base,
In the next chamber where I lay;
Heard all your projects, and resolv'd
Your wicked purposes to stay.

" And you, fair Lady, should have been
A victim to this villain's lust,
Had I, your saviour, not been sent
By Providence, all wise and just.

" His brutal ends accomplish'd here,
They meant to plunder next the hall;
Then, any uproar to prevent,
To massacre the servants all.

" Get hence, base wretch! and staunch thy blood;
That hand shall steal, shall stab no more:
Go to a convent, and repent
Thy vices practis'd heretofore."

" God-like deliv'rer, (Alice said,)
  A boundless debt to you I owe,
If, as I thought, 'twas great before,
  'Tis certainly much greater now.

" But, stranger, tell, (the Lady said,)
  What is your mission—what your name?
All weak and weary with your way,
  Last night you to the castle came.

And feebly went you to your bed,
  And sore of your fatigue complain'd;
And yet with very short repose
  Have you Herculean vigour gain'd."

" If then, I must the truth declare,
  Let not my words renew your fear;
As 'tis the love of you alone,
  Fair Lady, which has brought me here."

Pale turn'd the lovely Lady's face,
  Her looks express'd a deep surprise;
And, as with speechless grief she sat,
  On him she fix'd her piteous eyes.

Then off he cast his grisly beard,
  And weeds, wherewith he had been dress'd;
And, to the Lady's wond'ring view,
  The brave Lord Maurice stood confess'd!

"O my dear Lord!" (fair Alice cried,)
'Twas all her tongue had pow'r to say;
Too rapid far had been surprise,
And on his breast she swoon'd away!

But soon the husband's tender care
Restor'd the agitated wife;
And happy, as the story goes,
Continued all their future life.



FATAL OMENS.

'TWAS early on a summer morn,
Eudolpha, lovely fair!
Rose from her couch, and all alone
Walk'd forth to take the air.

Along the winding streamlet's side,
That whimpled thro' the grove,
The fair one walk'd, and sweetly sung
The song of artless love.

Her lay was like the linnet's strain,
As tuneful and as sweet;
And, as she walk'd, the primrose seem'd
To smile beneath her feet.

Orlando was, the following morn,
To take her for his bride,
And softly did Eudolpha seem
The ling'ring hours to chide.

" Roll on, ye hours ! (the damsel said,)
Nor thus my bliss delay:
Roll on, ye tardy hours ! and bring
The happy bridal day.

How painful to the anxious heart
Procrastination proves;
Nor better is that pain conceiv'd
Than by the lass who loves.

Yet still Eudolpha sweetly sung—
" The wedding-day is near,
Orlando is, I know, too true
To leave me aught to fear."

But, as she turn'd the mantling grove,
An object met her eyes,
Which, tho' she was in merry mood,
Transfix'd her with surprise :—

Betwixt her and the grey-ey'd east
A female form she view'd;
But soon it vanish'd from her sight,
Nor for a moment stood.

The vestments which the phantom wore
Were like the streams of light;
Her steps were soundless as the breath,
Her looks were heav'nly bright.

But tho' around the spectre's face
Angelic radiance shone,
Eudolpha well could recognise
The features of her own.

" Now this is surely my own wraith,
(The fearful damsel said,)
But it is morning, sith I ween
I need not be afraid."

Yet, pale and pensive, to her home
The fair Eudolpha hied ;
Her song was ceas'd, her heart was sad,
And now and then she sigh'd.

And homeward as the heartless maid
Her pensive course pursu'd,
Four silent magpies o'er the way,
Came flutt'ring thro' the wood.

A hare, too, cross'd, from her left hand,
The road with nimble pace,
And, as the creature pass'd, it star'd
The damsel in the face !

" What mean these boding signs, (she said,)
Or what may this forebear ?
A strange dejection weighs me down,
And kills my heart with care.

" What would my fearful fancy urge ?
No, no ! it must not be :—
Orlando !—O may heav'n forbid !
Mischance hath happen'd thee."

Eudolpha reach'd her father's house,
  Orlando he was there,
The pensive gloom forsook her face,
  Her heart forgot its care.

His presence ev'ry fear dispels,
  His fondness calms her breast;
Again resumes the lovely maid—
  " To-morrow I am bless'd."

Soon as the dusky ev'ning came,
  Orlando and the maid
Again an amorous saunter took
  Along the woodland shade.

The winds were hush'd, the sky serene,
  No zephyr shook the spray,
No sound throughout the grove was heard
  But Philomela's lay.

When, feebly glimm'ring on the green,
  A light the lovers view,
Which from the neighb'ring hamlet came,
  And to the church-yard drew.

Hoarse croak'd the raven on the spire,
  The owlet rais'd her scream,
Whilst slowly onward sped the light
  With faint but steady gleam.

Attendant with the twinkling ray
  No person either view'd;
But slow it skimm'd along the air,
  And o'er the church-yard stood.

"Ah, me! (Eudolpha sadly said,)
  Orlando, much I fear,
Strange omens and most luckless signs
  This day I've witness'd here.

"Good heav'n! in holy keeping have
  Both us and ours this night!
For much I dread some dire mischance
  Before to-morrow's light."

"Dispel those foolish fears, my love,
  (Orlando smiling said,)
If virtue be of heav'n the care,
  Thou need'st not be afraid.

"To-morrow, love, dost thou not know
  Our bridal is to be?
And sure thou know'st my heart too well,
  To question aught in me.'

"O heav'n forbid! (Eudolpha said,)
  A thought should e'er arise
To question my Orlando's love,
  Which more than life I prize.

"But those repeated dire portents
  Have such impression made,
That I, in spite of all my hopes,
  Must own myself afraid."

When homeward o'er the dreary green
  Return'd the youthful pair,
The fair Eudolpha's face still shew'd
  The marks of inward care.

The damsel to her chamber hied,
  But rest she could not find,
The recollection of the day
  By night engross'd her mind.

Nor could Orlando's fondness aught
  Her gloom of mind dispel;
Though ev'ry argument was tried
  Her lab'ring fears to quell.

At length the balmy hand of sleep
  Her weary eye-lids clos'd;
And for a while her troubled mind
  Appear'd to be compos'd.

But soon the fearful fair one wakes,
  E'en sleep could give no rest;
For busy fancy kept alive
  The terrors of her breast.

With feeble ray the wat'ry moon
  Athwart her chamber shone;
Hoarse down the chimney blew the wind,
  With melancholy tone.

With sleepless eye and fearful heart
  The wistful fair one lay,
And long impatiently she watch'd
  The wish'd-for dawn of day.

But as she look'd with anxious eyes,
  Eudolpha thought she spied
A little old man, with aspect grim,
  Standing by her bedside!

Two cubits seem'd to be his height,
  As much around, or more;
But of no common form was he;—
  Decrepitude all o'er!

His face was of a mouldy hue,
  But menacing his mein,
His looks were like the heath-brown bent,
  His eyes were grassy green.

Eudolpha lay in sad affright,
  Her heart it beat full sore;
For such a foul-fac'd sprite as he
  She ne'er had seen before!

"Eudolpha, thou shalt be my bride,
(The hideous spectre cried ;)
Eudolpha, by to-morrow's night—
Yes—thou shalt be my bride!

"I know that thou hast fondly hop'd,
But vain those hopes shall be ;
Expect not, howsoe'er it seem,
Orlando's bride to be.

"'Tis true that thou hast fondly hop'd,
But hope will oft deceive,
That thou shalt be Orlando's bride;
Gay Lady, ne'er believe.

"For know, that Destiny has doom'd
That union ne'er shall be ;
Eudolpha, by to-morrow's night
Expect to sleep with me."

But straightway crew the shrill-voic'd cock,
The frightful spectre fled;
Eudolpha, pale and sick of heart,
Lay trembling in her bed.

At length the weary morning came,
The woeful damsel rose,
The secret burthen of her heart,
Her fear full plainly shews.

"What ails my love? (Orlando said,)
What makes her look so sad?
Methinks on such a morn as this
She rather should be glad.

"For where's the maid, or far or near,
Who, on her bridal day,
Would not her lovliest looks assume,
And study to be gay?"

"Orlando, when the secret cause
Of all, you come to know,
Perhaps you'll cease to ask why thus,
I wear a face of woe."

Then to her list'ning lover she
Her wond'rous tale hath told;
With added observations, drawn
From instances of old.

"T'indulge those fears, (Orlando said,)
Is folly's worst extreme;
The little old man that you have seen
Is nothing but a dream.

"The rest are but old womens' tales,
The whimsies of the weak;
Then, fair one, let the smile of hope
Again adorn thy cheek.

"Drive melancholy from your mind,
For dang'rous is its use;
By it full oft imagin'd fears
Will real ills produce.

"Go to thy toilet, charmer, go,
And let thy fears subside;
The virgin blush, the willing smile,
Seem better in the bride."

Eudolpha to her chamber went,
Her friendly glass she took;
But, as she view'd her pallid cheek,
Her hand convulsive shook!

Down fell the mirror to the floor,
Which all in flinders flew;
And if her face was pale before,
It now far paler grew;

When, lo! she heard a hollow groan
Behind the tap'stried wall;
And sharp and shrill a voice unknown
Eudolpha's name did call!

The damsel dress'd herself with speed,
And to the hall she hied,
Where all the wedding-guests were sat,
To compliment the bride.

But right forlorn the lady look'd,
  Tho' 'twas her bridal day;
And sad and cheerless was her heart,
  When others all were gay.

At length they leave the spacious hall,
  And to the church repair;
Orlando, comeliest of the youths,
  And his Eudolpha fair.

But, scarcely had he left the gate,
  When he cried out amain—
"I have forgot the wedding-ring,
  And must return again!"

Swift to the hall Orlando flew,
  And eke as swift return'd;
But she the ominous delay
  With inward bodings mourn'd.

At length they came to the church-gate,
  The ready priest was there;
Each face the smile of pleasure wore,
  Save her's, the pensive fair;

For, wrapp'd in thought, she walk'd along,
  Nor once a side-look gave;
When, witless of her steps, she fell
  Into a new-made grave!

All pale and speechless, from the tomb
They rais'd the hapless maid;
And each, to soothe her heavy heart,
Employ their friendly aid.

But quite in vain the efforts prove
Of lover, friends, and all;
The glow of pleasure to her cheek,
No reason can recall.

But to the altar on she went,
Unconscious led along;
Nor minded she one object round,
Nor notic'd aught the throng.

The nuptial rite, with solemn air,
The priest had just began,
When loud and sudden scream'd the brid
"There comes the little old man!"

With consternation all were seiz'd,
Each heart with pity fill'd;
But, save the hapless bride alone,
The spectre none beheld.

Fast fled the roses from her cheek,
The lustre left her eye;
Her lab'ring breast convulsive heav'd
With many a heavy sigh.

Then, with a loud and deadly groan,
  Which shew'd the conflict o'er;
She lifeless sunk upon the ground,
  Nor utter'd one word more!



THE
INFERNAL FERRYMAN.

'TWAS midnight, when the busy host
  Of weary mortals take their rest,
Save those by love or fortune cross'd,
  Or such as guilty fears infest.

When on her downy couch reclin'd,
  Roxannah, lovely lady! lay;
In sleep she fancied, 'midst the wind,
  She heard a voice thus loudly say:—

"Roxannah, fair Roxannah, dear!
  Roxannah, lovely lady! rise;
For, whilst you thoughtless slumber here,
  Your husband in foul combat dies."

The Lady rais'd a piteous scream—
  "What! is my Lord Sir Turquil slain!"
But, recollecting 'twas a dream,
  She laid her down, and slept again.

But scarcely had she clos'd her eye,
And turn'd herself again to rest,
Before again, with plaintive cry,
The voice the lady thus address'd :—

" Roxannah, fair Roxannah, dear!
Roxannah, lovely lady, rise!
For, whilst you thoughtless slumber here,
Your husband in foul combat dies!"

Amaz'd, the lady left her bed;
Again she listens all around;
But all is hush'd—the voice is fled;
Nor hears she now the slightest sound.

" What means this call? (the lady cried,)
What may this death-like summons be?
Why doth the messenger not bide
And tell his embassy to me?"

Again she turn'd to her repose,
Address'd herself to sleep once more;
But scarce might she her eye-lids close,
Till thus the voice, loud as before :—

" Roxannah, fair Roxannah, dear!
Roxannah, lovely lady, rise!
For, whilst you thoughtless slumber here,
Your husband in foul combat dies!

" He and Lord Waltho, up the west,
Have met by chance in yonder plain;
Each with the deadliest hate impress'd,
They fought, and both, alas! are slain.

" Near Edward's monument they lie,
All pale and welt'ring in their gore;
No one at their dispute was by—
Now, lady, sleep; for all is o'er!"

" Three times (the fair Roxannah said)
I have been call'd—yea, three times three;
And much my bosom feels afraid;
For whence may this strange message be?

" What, tho' I'm told the combat's o'er,
What, tho' I'm told to sleep away;
When they are welt'ring in their gore,
Then longer should Roxannah stay?

" No! I will raise my servants all,
And quickly hie me to the place;
Too solemn is th' impressive call,
To hope, uncertain is the case."

Then from her couch the lady rose,
All pale and horror-struck was she;
And she has huddled on her clothes
With all the hurry that might be.

And she has rais'd her servants all,
  Tho' cold and piercing was the night;
And they've together left the hall,
  To seek Sir Turquil by moonlight.

And soon the fatal place they knew,
  With prying eyes they search around;
Nor look'd they long before they view
  Two mangled bodies on the ground!

The lady smote her lovely breast,
  She wrung her hands, and tore her hair;
Her tender bosom seem'd distress'd
  With all the anguish of despair.

" Whence could proceed this mortal strife?
  What cause produce this bitter woe?
What urge you on to loss of life?
  Such friends so short a while ago!

"Oh! 't must have been a deadly cause
  Produc'd a consequence so dire;
And death has left an awful pause,
  Whence we may bootlessly enquire.

" When you, Sir Turquil, left your home,
  And pensive posted out so late,
Ah! did I think that you had come
  So soon to meet so sad a fate!"

Then from the baron's body cold
  She wip'd away the clotted gore!
Oh! it was piteous to behold;
  For over him she wept full sore.

Then tidings fair Roxannah sent
  To Winifred, Lord Waltho's wife,
T'inform her of the sad event,
  Wherein her lord had lost his life.

And she has wept, ah! well-a-day!
  Until her beauteous eyes were sore;
But man nor woman heard her say
  Who 'twas that she lamented for;

But she in secret made her wail,
  (And certes she was wond'rous sad,)
Tho' now unheard her bitter bale,
  For reasons she most secret had.

And they have brave Lord Waltho borne
  To Drumbough * Castle, sad and slow,
Where numbers his misfortune mourn,
  For all that knew his worth were woe.

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* Drumbough Castle, at present the property of the Earl of Lonsdale, formerly belonged to the Lords Dacres, and was anciently a Roman station.

Sir Turquil he to Brough was ta'en,
Attended by his lady fair;
But not by such a sorrowing train;—
Of pity he'd the smaller share.

For he was ever haughty, proud,
Was cruel, and was false beside,
And all the country talk'd aloud
Of his oppression and his pride.

Roxannah had a dove-like mein,
She lov'd him as a duteous dame;
But by the world 'twas plainly seen
His part to her was not the same.

Yet was it wonderful to all,
Who knew those barons heretofore,
Such deadly dudgeon should befall
The twain; their hapless end much more.

It chanc'd that on an ev'ning clear
Roxannah went to Eden side;
She look'd around—no boat was near—
The river it was deep and wide.

And long she loudly call'd withal,
And anxious saunter'd on the shore;
The echoing rocks return'd the call,
Yet no one came to help her o'er.

At length, within a creek hard by,
An aged ferryman she spied,
She beckon'd him his oars to ply,
And waft her to the other side.

With feeble stroke he pulls the oar,
And brings his wherry to the strand,
To where Roxannah, by the shore,
Doth for her passage anxious stand.

The tott'ring bark Roxannah gains,
The boatman heaves the dashing oar;
Increasing strength his arm obtains,
And fast they leave the deep'ning shore

But furious roars the gath'ring gale,
And fiercely roars the foaming tide;
The boatman's vigour 'gins to fail,
And danger stares on ev'ry side.

" Pull on, good ferryman, pull on!
(With falt'ring voice the lady said;)
Exert yourself, or all is gone,
For, trust me, I am sore afraid."

But louder grew the blust'ring wind,
And fiercer roll'd the furious flood;
The boatman he the oars resign'd—
The vessel drifted where it would.

Roxannah turn'd a deadly hue,
Deep terror almost stopp'd her breath,
For all around, within her view,
Appear'd to threaten instant death.

When, lo! before her wond'ring eyes,
The feeble ferryman no more,
She saw Sir Turquil sternly rise,
All hideous, and besmear'd with gore!

"Roxannah! thou wert once my wife!
(With angry frown the spectre said,)
By thee I was belov'd in life,
But canst thou love me now, when dead?

"To-night, fair lady, thou shalt sleep
In death's cold arms along with me;
Thy chambers are amidst the deep,
Thy bridal bed is in the sea!

"Hark! how they cry—Come, come along!
The water-spirits call for thee!
This, lady, is thy wedding-song,
For thou, to-night, shalt sleep with me!"

Just at that instant, from beneath,
A group of frightful figures rose;
Their forms were horrible as death,
Roxannah's heart chill horror froze.

Lord Waltho, 'midst the dreadful throng,
  Distinctly could the lady see;
Who cried—" Base Turquil, come along!
  Hell only waits for such as thee!"

Then fixing their infernal paws
  On him,—down, down the vessel fell!
The deep, with wide-extended jaws,
  Receives them, as they sink to hell!

And loudly did the lady scream,
  As loudly for assistance call,
As fast she sunk beneath the stream,
  Yet saviour saw she none at all.

But when just ready to descend,
  Exhausted with the swallowing wave,
She saw kind Mercy's arm extend,
  To snatch her from the op'ning grave

A fisherman, with hasty sweep,
  Row'd thro' the tempest, swiftly on,
And drew her, breathless, from the deep,
  The instant she had else been gone.

But scarce the boat had she attain'd,
  Ere silenc'd was the whirlwind's roar;
The stream its wonted calm regain'd,
  And peacefully they reach the shore.

" Thanks to thy kindness and thy skill;
  Thanks, gentle fisherman! (said she,)
At present I have but good will,
  Yet hence thou shalt rewarded be."

" No recompense, sweet lady fair,
  I ask, and will accept of none;
But I a secret must declare,
  Which interests yourself alone.

" Sir Turquil, he whom you have mourn'd,
  Was cruel, faithless, and unkind!
Your fondness he but ill return'd,
  For fouler thoughts employ'd his mind.

" He lov'd Lord Waltho's wicked wife!
  She countenanc'd his base address;
The guilty passion cost his life,
  Nor cost the brave Lord Waltho less!

" Foul were the purposes which led
  Your husband, on that fatal night,
To leave his lady, and his bed,
  And villain to commence outright.

" The wicked Winifred and he,
  Their commerce easier to enjoy,
In dev'lish council did agree
  You and Lord Waltho to destroy!

"For him the poison'd bowl that night
His trait'rous consort had prepar'd;
And you, by the returning light,
A draught as deadly would have shar'd!

"But that Lord Waltho's trusty page,
By chance o'erheard their foul intent;
And, fill'd with horror and with rage,
Directly to his master went.

"In haste Lord Waltho took his steed,
Tho' late the hour, and wild the way,
And posted off with fatal speed,
And for the knight in ambush lay.

"They met—the combat lasted long,
For theirs was sure a mortal strife;
And each was brave—and each was strong,
And each to each resign'd his life.

"Nor even ended here the hate
Of base Sir Turquil, with his breath;
For know, from your sad plight of late,
Resentment lives e'en after death!

"But now, Sir Turquil's shade no more,
Malign howe'er his malice be,
Shall torture thee as heretofore,
For hence in endless ward is he.

'But who art thou, (Roxannah said,)
 That know'st this wond'rous tale so well?
How was this information made
 To thee, good boatman, prythee tell?"

"Oft, lady, has that bounteous hand
 My frequent indigence supplied;
I am, Roxannah, as I stand,
 The anchorite of Eden side."

"That holy man, (the lady said,)
 Now sleeps in death; this may not be!"
She look'd——the phantom soft was fled!
 The boatman she no more could see!

Long after, as the legend says,
 Roxannah liv'd a widow'd life;
And saw, perhaps, more happy days,
 Than when she was Sir Turquil's wife.

But Lady Winifred, false fair!
 She to a nunnery is gone;
In hopes, by penitence and pray'r,
 For former vices to atone.

JESSICA, JOE, AND THE SOLDIER.

THE sun had just set in an ev'ning serene,
And the sky was fast garbing in black,
When Jessica tript o'er the dew-moisten'd green
To look for her Joe, who at Gosport had been,
And she now was expecting him back.

For Joe, honest soul! was a sailor as kind
As e'er swigg'd of the heart-cheering bowl;
Tho' oft he'd been tost by the waves and the wind,
Yet they ne'er had once ruffled the calm of his mind,
And his Jessy he lov'd to his soul.

But Joseph, poor lad, was not doom'd to return,
For the press-gang had grappled him fast;
While Jessy was left his sad absence to mourn,
With anxious suspence in impatience to burn,
And he to the tender was pass'd.

Soon the vessel unmoor'd, what a parting to view!
'Twould have melted the heart of a stone!
She constancy vow'd, begg'd her Joe to be true,
Kiss'd, shook hands, blew her nose, bade a tender adieu!
Then homewards she hied all alone.

For five tedious years o'er the rough roaring main,
Honest Joseph was banded, poor boy!
At length gentle peace call'd him homeward again,
With his pouch full of shiners, his heart void of pain,
And his cottage he sought full of joy.

But say what surprise in his bosom must be,
When, on suddenly op'ning the door,
He saw his dear wife, all as brisk as a bee,
Singing sweet lullaby to a child on her knee,
And a soldier was pacing the floor.

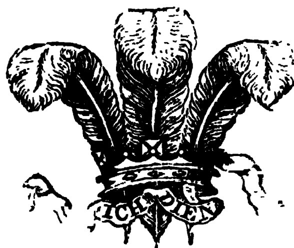
The short interjection of *humph!* 'scap'd his lips,
Whilst he star'd with confusion around;
"*Humph again!* (said the wife;) you must blame your long trips,
You should come sooner home, we can't say for odd slips;
Come, Joe, take a chair, and sit down."

Joe bluster'd awhile, call'd her base and unkind,
Curs'd and storm'd, rent with rage and despair;
Such treatment he never expected to find,
Swore women were fickle, and false as the wind,
Then calmly sank down in the chair.

The soldier, in silence tho' hitherto pent,
A sort of a parley propos'd;
He thought further mischief 'twould likely pre-
vent,
To which pliant Jessica gave her consent,
And Joe with a treaty soon clos'd.

'Twas there stipulated the sailor should be
Paramount whilst on shore he remain'd;
But when he'd occasion to venture to sea,
The soldier in turn then the landlord should be,
And the brats be in common maintain'd.

Thus many a brave hero who ventures his life,
From ease and each solace debarr'd,
Oft needs these gay laurels he gathers in strife,
To cover the honours conferr'd by his wife,—
Too often the warrior's reward.



THE

DEATH OF ORFIN.

HIGH upon the craggy steep,
Orfin stood in pensive woe,
Poring o'er the dinsome deep,
Billowing on the beach below.

Heedless of the deaf'ning roar,
He beheld the raging flood;
Fearless felt the rocky shore
Shake beneath him as he stood.

Loudly blew the western blast,
Fast the cloud-fraught torrents fall,
Quick the quiv'ring light'ning pass'd;
Orfin heedless bears it all.

Like the op'ning glare of day,
Anger sat upon his brow;
Flaming like the pointed ray
From his sparkling eyes below.

On his breast the beamy star,
  Wrought in gold and em'ralds bright,
Gaily glitter'd from afar,
  Like the streams of crystal light.

O'er his back, in sullen pride,
  Broad his massy shield was slung;
Whilst, suspended by his side,
  Loose his mighty sabre hung.

Oft had he its temper tried,
  Oft the foe its force had felt,
Oft in blood had it been dy'd,
  And to hundreds death had dealt.

From its sheath, with sullen ire,
  Fierce the glittering glaive he drew,
Fierce he struck; the sparkling fire
  From the rocks effulgent flew.

"Say, (he cried,) shall Orfin bear
  Thus to hear his lord defam'd?
Or great Geon-ergon hear
  By his foes a coward nam'd?

"Geon-ergon,* mighty king,
  Monarch of the hundred isles;
In whose court the graces spring,
  On whose reign kind heav'n still smiles.

* Geon-ergon, a husbandman.

"Shall he meanly bear the scorn
  Of the base-born tyrants round?
Shall his provinces be torn,
  And he basely be uncrown'd?

"No! while Orfin's arm can wield
  This fair sword, it ne'er shall be;
Brave Insulia* ne'er shall yield
  Her proud empire of the sea."

Like the black-wing'd storm that blows
  O'er the Arctic region drear,
Orfin's indignation rose,
  As he rais'd the threat'ning spear.

When, far o'er the tow'ring steep,
  He beheld, with wond'ring eyes,
From the bosom of the deep,
  Fair Insulia's genius rise.

Azure was her flowing robe,
  Dignity her aspect fill'd;
In one hand she bore a globe,
  Whilst her next a sceptre held.

"Orfin, son of Birman,† hear!
  (Said the pow'r;) my words attend:
Brave Insulia needs thy spear,
  Geon-ergon thou defend.

* From Insula. † Altered from Birnham.

"Danger circles him around,
Ruin threatens from afar;
Thou alone by heaven art found
Worthy to support the war.

"Carrol,* King of Ispan,† he,
Leagued with neighbouring tyrants swore,
That ere long his fleets should be
Moor'd on fair Albania's‡ shore.

"Fear not his imperious boast;
This he may repent too late;
Fear not for his mighty host—
Little see they of their fate.

"Soon the renegado king,
(Offspring of the rocky isle,)
Shall to bondage Carrol bring,
And his kingdoms shall despoil.

"Bid Albania's heroes rise,
Bid Irenia's § sons be true;
Nor Septentrion aid despise;
Victory is promis'd you!

* From Carolus. † From Hispan, or Hispaniola.
‡ From Albana, or Albion. § From Irenia, or Erin.

"For the mighty warriors call;
  Let the deaf'ning thunders roar;
Soon shall Ispan's glory fall,
  E'en upon their native shore.

"But, undaunted champion, know,
  That, amidst the bloody strife,
E're half conquer'd be the foe,
  Orfin, thou must lose thy life!

"Let not this thy soul dismay,
  Yield not thou to puerile dread;
Deathless glory crowns the day,
  Paradise shall be thy bed.

"Is the sacrifice too great,
  Sets a virtuous nation free?
Orfin, know by this thy feat,
  Millions owe their lives to thee."

Orfin heard the stern decree,
  But unmov'd he heard the whole;
Thousands 'twould have dash'd, but he
  Felt new ardour fire his soul!

With a more than mortal mien.
  Gracefully the hero bow'd;
While his countenance serene,
  Prov'd him of th' election proud.

Soon Insulia's gallant fleet,
Fraught with heroes, leaves the coast;
Not to wait for, but to meet,
Carrol's pride and Ispan's boast.

Orfin, son of Berman, he,
Foremost in the high command;
Leads his squadrons o'er the sea,
To explore the hostile land.

And, as from their native shore,
Briskly ply the martial crew,
Orfin, ne'er to see it more,
Ling'ring looks a last adieu!

What, tho' certain of his doom,
E'en without the hope of life;
Orfin shrinks not from the tomb,
Eager for the glorious strife.

Soon the hostile squadrons join,
Soon for action they prepare;
Soon they form th' embattl'd line,
And loud thunders shake the air.

Death assumes his direst forms,
Clad in smoke and mingling fire;
Devastation widely storms,
With each burst whole heaps expire.

Like a lion in the fight,
Orfin rages far and near;
All his friends confess his might,
All his foes are shook with fear.

Orfin saw proud Ispan's boast,
Ship by ship, inglorious yield;
Ev'n upon their native coast,
Feebly struggling for the field.

Half their power had been subdued,
Half the victory was won,
Yet the contest was pursued
Fierce as when it first begun.

Orfin thro' the thick'ning war
Stood above his peers confest,
Seen conspicuous from afar
By the blazon on his breast.

Ispan's warriors saw with grief
All the feats of Berman's son;
Saw the crescent-crested chief,
Had the hard-fought battle won.

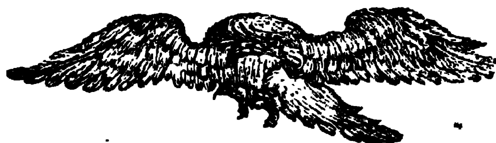
Stung with rage and mingling shame,
Vengeance glistening in his eye,
Argon took the deadly aim,
"Orfin, (said the warrior,) die!"

To his breast the engine dire
He the cruel Argon drew;
Pinion'd by th' implusive fire,
Fate's commission'd warrant flew.

Orfin's breast the bullet found,
Deep it pierc'd the hero's heart;
Life, retiring from the wound,
Seem'd impatient to depart.

"I have done my duty here,
(Faint th' expiring warrior cried,)
Victory, I know is near!"—
Saying—clos'd his eyes, and died.

Pitying angels from the sky,
When they saw the conflict cease;
Snatch'd his spirit, and on high
Bore it to the realms of peace.



THE VAMPYRE.

ARGUMENT.

THE story of the *Vampyre* is founded on an opinion or report which prevailed in Hungary, and several parts of Germany, towards the beginning of the last century:—It was then asserted, that, in several places, dead persons had been known to leave their graves, and, by night, to revisit the habitations of their friends; whom, by suckosity, they drained of their blood as they slept. The person thus phlebotomised was sure to become a Vampyre in their turn; and if it had not been for a lucky thought of the clergy, who ingeniously recommended staking them in their graves, we should by this time have had a greater swarm of blood-suckers than we have at present, numerous as they are. Many and ingenious were the animadversions, both of the faculty and clergy, to adopt some probable reasons for the physical cause of such an uncommon phenomenon.---It was asserted that a portion of the animal spirits, not having escaped at the decease of the body, had retained a power of volition; and, investing themselves with some part of the body which had not immediately yielded to putrefaction, they were thus enabled to make those prodigious excursions from the grave, and to return at pleasure, without any apparent inconvenience. Others were of opinion that these were a class of demons, who are supposed to be very numerous, who getting possession of any human excrescences, rendered themselves partially corporeal, and perfectly visible at pleasure. From some of our modern voyagers it appears, that the notion of the existence of Vampyres was very generally known and credited among the Dutch, and some other settlements in America.—I do not imagine that a thousandth part of the world are acquainted with the reason why the secundine, immediately after the nativity of the fœtus, is so carefully deflagrated by the obstetric and others, who preside at the *accouchement.* This was founded on the opinion that those numerous domestic demons, of whom they had such a perfect belief, were tenacious of

any opportunity that furnished them with a means of obtaining any portion of humanity, which they certainly preferred to any other animal substances. We may suppose that the umbellicum would make a very desirable jerkin for one of these gentry. Hence it has been, that since they had such a desire to render themselves in part corporeal and visible, as it pleased them, that when human excrescences were not easily obtainable, they were forced to repair to the common slaughter-houses, carrion heaps, &c. there to array themselves in such habiliments as chance threw in their way. From which we may infer the reason so many of our common apparitions have, per force, been compelled to appear in the forms of horses, cows, sheep, asses, dogs, cats, &c. &c. in fine, every sort of animal; so that many of these might, in fact, be said to be the ghosts of the animals they represented, rather than of any particular person.

"WHY looks my lord so deadly pale?
Why fades the crimson from his cheek?
What can my dearest husband ail?
Thy heartfelt cares, O Herman, speak!

"Why, at the silent hour of rest,
Dost thou in sleep so sadly mourn?
Has tho' with heaviest griefs oppress'd,
Griefs too distressful to be borne.

"Why heaves thy breast?—why throbs thy heart?
O speak! and if there be relief,
Thy Gertrude solace shall impart,
If not, at least shall share thy grief.

"Wan is that cheek, which once the bloom
Of manly beauty sparkling shew'd;
Dim are those eyes, in pensive gloom,
That late with keenest lustre glow'd.

"Say why, too, at the midnight hour,
You sadly pant and tug for breath,
As if some supernat'ral pow'r
Were pulling you away to death?

"Restless, tho' sleeping, still you groan,
And with convulsive horror start;
O Herman! to thy wife make known
That grief which preys upon thy heart."

"O Gertrude! how shall I relate
Th' uncommon anguish that I feel;
Strange as severe is this my fate,—
A fate I cannot long conceal.

"In spite of all my wonted strength,
Stern destiny has seal'd my doom;
The dreadful malady at length
Will drag me to the silent tomb!"

"But say, my Herman, what's the cause
Of this distress, and all thy care,
That, vulture-like, thy vitals gnaws,
And galls thy bosom with despair?

" Sure this can be no common grief,
Sure this can be no common pain?
Speak, if this world contain relief,
That soon thy Gertrude shall obtain."

" O Gertrude, 'tis a horrid cause,
O Gertrude, 'tis unusual care,
That, vulture-like, my vitals gnaws,
And galls my bosom with despair.

" Young Sigismund, my once dear friend,
But lately he resign'd his breath;
With others I did him attend
Unto the silent house of death.

" For him I wept, for him I mourn'd,
Paid all to friendship that was due;
But sadly friendship is return'd,
Thy Herman he must follow too!

" Must follow to the gloomy grave,
In spite of human art or skill;
No pow'r on earth my life can save,
'Tis fate's unalterable will!

" Young Sigismund, my once dear friend,
But now my persecutor foul,
Doth his malevolence extend
E'en to the torture of my soul.

"By night, when, wrapt in soundest sleep,
  All mortals share a soft repose,
My soul doth dreadful vigils keep,
  More keen than which hell scarcely knows.

"From the drear mansions of the tomb,
  From the low regions of the dead,
The ghost of Sigismund doth roam,
  And dreadful haunts me in my bed!

"There, vested in infernal guise,
  (By means to me not understood,)
Close to my side the goblin lies,
  And drinks away my vital blood!

"Sucks from my veins the streaming life,
  And drains the fountain of my heart!
O Gertrude, Gertrude! dearest wife!
  Unutterable is my smart.

"When surfeited, the goblin dire,
  With banqueting by suckled gore,
Will to his sepulchre retire,
  Till night invites him forth once more.

"Then will he dreadfully return,
  And from my veins life's juices drain;
Whilst, slumb'ring, I with anguish mourn,
  And toss with agonizing pain!

"Already I'm exhausted, spent;
His carnival is nearly o'er,
My soul with agony is rent,
To-morrow I shall be no more!

"But, O my Gertrude! dearest wife!
The keenest pangs hath last remain'd—
When dead, I too shall seek thy life,
Thy blood by Herman shall be drain'd!

"But to avoid this horrid fate,
Soon as I'm dead and laid in earth,
Drive thro' my corpse a jav'lin straight;—
This shall prevent my coming forth.

"O watch with me, this last sad night,
Watch in your chamber here alone,
But carefully conceal the light
Until you hear my parting groan.

"Then at what time the vesper-bell
Of yonder convent shall be toll'd,
That peal shall ring my passing knell,
And Herman's body shall be cold!

"Then, and just then, thy lamp make bare,
The starting ray, the bursting light,
Shall from my side the goblin scare,
And shew him visible to sight!"

The live-long night poor Gertrude sate,
Watch'd by her sleeping, dying lord;
The live-long night she mourn'd his fate,
The object whom her soul ador'd.

Then at what time the vesper-bell
Of yonder convent sadly toll'd,
Then, then was peal'd his passing knell,
The hapless Herman he was cold!

Just at that moment Gertrude drew
From 'neath her cloke the hidden light;
When, dreadful! she beheld in view
The shade of Sigismund!—sad sight!

Indignant roll'd his ireful eyes,
That gleam'd with wild horrific stare;
And fix'd a moment with surprise,
Beheld aghast th' enlight'ning glare.

His jaws cadaverous were besmear'd
With clotted carnage o'er and o'er,
And all his horrid whole appear'd
Distent, and fill'd with human gore!

With hideous scowl the spectre fled;
She shriek'd aloud;—then swoon'd away!
The hapless Herman in his bed,
All pale, a lifeless body lay!

Next day in council 'twas decreed,
(Urg'd at the instance of the state,)
That shudd'ring nature should be freed
From pests like these ere 'twas too late.

The choir then burst the fun'ral dome
Where Sigismund was lately laid,
And found him, tho' within the tomb,
Still warm as life, and undecay'd.

With blood his visage was distain'd,
Ensanguin'd were his frightful eyes,
Each sign of former life remain'd,
Save that all motionless he lies.

The corpse of Herman they contrive
To the same sepulchre to take,
And thro' both carcases they drive,
Deep in the earth, a sharpen'd stake!

By this was finish'd their career,
Thro' this no longer they can roam;
From them their friends have nought to fear,
Both quiet keep the slumb'ring tomb.



A
FAIRY TALE.

IN days of yore, when (quoth romance)
The fairy sprites were wont to dance
Around the may-pole on the the green,
With Oberon, and Mab their queen;
Whilst on the slender mushroom's head,
Their tiny banquet oft was spread,
With pearly dew-drops for their drink,
In acorn-cups up to the brink;
And pigmy knights, in armour bright
Oft gambol'd by the moon's pale light;
Strange was their pow'r, the pranks they play'd,
With such as dar'd their haunts invade;—
With various forms themselves they'd please,
And others could transform with ease;
Turn day to night, or night to day,
Make black be white, or green be grey;
Could lengthen time, or make it short,
Just as it suited with their sport;
Give to deformity each grace,
And frightful turn the fairest face;

Oft have these playful wanton elves,
Just purposely to please themselves.
Slid thro' the key-hole of the door,
When all within was thought secure;
Sly slipt the sleeping babe away
And in its place a fairy lay!
Yet, tho' to mischief often prone,
This did not busy them alone;
For oft the cleanly household maid,
Their frequent bounties has repaid;
With rings of fair and brilliant hue,
Or teasters left her in her shoe;
But if her house was filthy kept,
They'd pinch the hussy as she slept:
And by such warning teach the jade,
That sluts were never better paid.
'Twas in those days of fairy reign,
Of which replete is Chaucer's strain,
That, on a summer afternoon,
A certain simple country loon
By chance came whistling o'er the lee
With heart as lightsome as might be.
A load of oatmeal in a sack
The bumkin bore upon his back;
And tho' both youthful, stout, and strong,
Yet lazily he drawl'd along;
And lilting an unmeaning air,
Betray'd a heart devoid of care.

When near the corner of a wood,
By which a clay-built cottage stood,
The sound of music struck his ears,
Which pleas'd the gaping rustic hears,
And, as he felt no mind for speed,
He stood to hear whence might proceed
Those sounds harmonious, which he swore
Excell'd whate'er he'd heard before.
Wheree'er he listens still 'tis plain
The hovel must the choir contain;
Wherefore the boor at all adventures—
Sans ceremony—boldly enters,
And at the door his station took,
Intent to take a standing look;
Not to go further, save invited,
For fear he might be ill requited,
And his too curious prying folly
A sequel find more melancholy;
For so impertinence, by right,
Both men and fairies should requite;
And nothing can be reckon'd ruder
Than an unmanner'd bold intruder,
Who'll frequently, 'thout invitation,
Be meddling where he's no occasion.
But scarce had he the threshold gain'd,
When eyes and ears were entertain'd;
For, since he first beheld the light,
He ne'er had seen a fairer sight.

A band of fairies heav'n'ly fair,
Array'd in green with neatest care,
In youthful bloom, whilst ev'ry grace
Adorn'd each pigmy elfin's face;
And, as the music gaily play'd,
A thousand antic springs they made;
Now here, now there, now high, now low,
Now strangely quick, now gently slow;
Still as the minstrels chang'd, so they
Their movements chang'd, and danc'd away.
Whilst Hodge, with extasy unbounded,
Gaz'd on with wonder quite confounded,
But still suppos'd, so throng they'd been,
His entrance they had never seen;
Nor had it ever struck his brain,
That these were of the elfin train.
But wrongly had the lout believ'd;
He from the first had been perceiv'd;
For these were fairies, and may be
Knew what he thought as well as he;
And cunning had he been, I ween,
Had he stood there by them unseen.
But that it seems 'twas their intent
With him t'increase their merriment;
For they no seeming notice took,
But let him peaceful keep his nook;
Nem. con. determin'd that he should
Stand there till doomsday, if he would;

Whilst they their gambols still pursu'd,
And he with equal pleasure view'd.
But little wist he with the throng
That he had saunter'd there so long;
For their gay pranks and music strains
Had so bewitch'd the gawky's brains,
That it ne'er enter'd Hodge's head
His family were wanting bread;
And that he should have posted back
With that same flour he'd in his sack.
At length, grown weary with his station,
And sated quite with recreation,
Once more the oafling with his load
Slunk out, and hasten'd on the road;
For 't must be known, that whilst he stopp'd
His burthen he had never dropp'd,
But, as a cursory beholder,
Stood bending with it on his shoulder;
And, so well pleas'd the boor had been,
With all he'd heard, with all he'd seen,
That he suppos'd, amidst the sport,
His dalliance there had been but short;
A quarter of an hour at most—
But strangely he'd his reck'ning lost.
Well; homewards Hodge in haste now hies,
But what strange objects meet his eyes!
Chang'd was the face of all around him;
Indeed, sufficient to confound him.

For ev'ry now and then he'd meet
Whole groupes of strangers in the street ;
And, gaze on either side he would,
Long clusters of new buildings stood.
In fine, the whole was so much chang'd,
That he to all seem'd quite estrang'd ;
And scarcely could the bumkin keep
From thinking that he was asleep :
Indeed, what could he justly deem
This wond'rous change less than a dream ?
At length, with gazing, staring round,
His well-known cottage haply found ;
But louder here the uproar grew,
Each one he met affrighted flew !
And cried, " Heav'n shield us from all evil !
That's Hodge's ghost, or else the devil !"
" Zounds ! (quoth the boor,) what means this clatter ?
Are all gone mad ! or what's the matter ?
Why, here the people flee the road,
And shun me as I were a toad !
Sure this must be some witch'd delusion,
For all around me seems confusion ;—
Or is it I, or they, or who,
That are bewitch'd ? for I don't know.
All things appear transform'd I view
I'm certes metamorphos'd too !"
At length, his Marg'ret, honest dame !
Rous'd by th' uncommon clamour, came ;

But soon as she poor Hodge beheld,
Her aspect seem'd with terror fill'd.
She scream'd aloud, and back retreating,
Endeavour'd to avoid the meeting.
But Hodge, enrag'd and quite perplex'd,
And with these strange proceedings vex'd,
Threw down his load, and, interposing,
Stopt her as she the door was closing;
And cried, "Fie, Margaret! what the devil
Has made you all so curs'd uncivil?
For young and old, I think, egad,
Are, rich and poor, enmasse gone mad!
Why, wife! this all seems wond'rous strange;
What witchcraft can have wrought this change?
Why, I'm thy Hodge, Mag! dost not know me?
Now don't be foolish—but come to me!"
She shriek'd again, and faltering said,
"This seven long years have you been dead!
The fact I recollect too well,
As all the neighbours round can tell."
"Dead! (exclaim'd Hodge,) why, what the curse
Can all this mean; 'tis worse and worse!
Why, sure you know 'twas but to-day
That to the mill I took my way,
To bring some meal in that there sack,
Which I've just tumbled from my back;
I'm sure I stopt not on the road,
Nor ever once set down my load,

Save for a trice I stopt to view,
In yonder cot, a merry crew;
Who, with their cap'rings and vagaries,
Were frisking like so many fairies.
And then they kept their tune so duly,
Their music it was charming truly;
And, had yourself been there to see,
You would have stopt as well as me;
For I protest, my dearest wife,
I ne'er saw th' like on't in my life.
But surely I ha'n't stopt so long
That you should set up this war-song?
And all the town play hide and seek,
As if I'd stopt away a week."
"A week! (quoth Marg'ret ;) by these tears,
You have been dead these seven long years!
We know you once went to the mill,
For ought we know, you are there still;
For since you first set out, good lack!
None e'er beheld you yet come back.
And 'twas concluded all around
That you'd been murder'd, witch'd, or drown'd;
And as, alas! you ne'er return'd,
For you one tedious year I mourn'd,—
For you the widow's weeds I wore,
And patiently my suff'rings bore;
And when I'd thus a twelvemonth tarried
Single for you,—again I married.

And to my second spouse have brought
Six chopping children,—who are thought
To be as stout ones, and as viewly,
As any in the village, truly!

"Married again! (quoth Hodge;) adzooks,
The woman's mad!—Lord, how she looks!
She trembles too, and turns as white
As if I were some hell-born sprite;
For God's sake, Marg'ret, let me hold thee,
And in these longing arms enfold thee!"
She backwards reel'd, and, with a shriek,
Swoon'd,—for she hadn't pow'r to speak.

Some neighbours, bolder than the rest,
Mov'd to behold her thus distrest,
Resolv'd, as 'twas a work of merit,
At least to parley with the spirit;
For well they knew the worst and most
That could be done by any ghost,
Was only to a fix'd extent;
And this with ease they could prevent;
For, should the fiend begin to riot,
Him soon Mess John had pow'r to quiet.
So in a phalanx gath'ring round,
With circles fortified their ground;
And, muttering o'er their pater-nosters,
Slowly advanc'd in various postures.
But Hodge, not waiting salutation,
Thus spoke the trembling congregation:

"Good neighbours, now, for God's sake ! say,
What is your meaning ? tell me pray.
Are you all mad, as you appear,
Or are you but dispos'd to jeer
And tamper me with ridicule,
Because you think I am a fool ?"
"Stop there, good ghost ! (said one most gravely)
No doubt we'll answer thee right bravely.
But first, to answer us prepare,
Quite rational our questions are ;
Say why, now sev'n long years are past,
Hath the cold grave releas'd at last
Thy pent up spirit, thus to range
To frighten us in form most strange,
And carry terror and dismay
Ev'n in the very face of day ?
Ghosts were of yore, we know, permitted
To roam at midnight, and have quitted
Their sepulchres, and in those times
Did penance for their former crimes :
But when sev'n years thou hast laid quiet,
Now to come here and make a riot
Is what we cannot understand,
For which thy reasons we demand;
Moreover, thus to fright thy wife,
Who lov'd thee in thy nat'ral life
As well as any woman could do,
Is what no Christian spirit should do.

'Tis true, she has again got married;
But then she for a twelvemonth tarried;
Which seems a reasonable season,
For any thing in common reason."
Why, zounds! (quoth Hodge,) d'ye all agree
To make a simpleton of me?
Thus, proving what my wife hath said,
Spite of my senses swear I'm dead!
I know I've oft been banter'd duly,
But this is too egregious truly;
And, let me tell you, and my wife,
I am not dead, upon my life!"
"Not dead! (exclaim'd the wond'ring train,)
Then you must be bewitch'd, 'tis plain.
'Tis just sev'n years, this very day,
Since to the mill you took your way;
And, from that moment to this hour,
You never have been seen before!
'Tis now quite evident, the crew
You stepp'd into the cot to view,
Who pleas'd you so with their vagaries,
Have been a set of spiteful fairies."
"Nay, then, (quoth Hodge,) the thing's unriddl'd,
For seven long years they danc'd and fiddl'd,
And mine the folly, not the crime,
Was looking at them all the time.
I find I've been a stupid elf;—
Now let me haste and hang myself."

"Just as you please for that," (quoth they:)
But Hodge contriv'd another way;—
Disliking death and single life,
He went and sought another wife.



THE SWORD.

FAIR shone the moon o'er Brougham's* towr's,
And fair on Emmont's streams,
And fair down Eden's fertile vale,
Far shone its length'ning beams;

When Lady Eleanor arose,
And listless left her bed;
For peace her pillow had forsook,
And slumber from her fled.

And she has climb'd the highest tow'r,
And trac'd the turrets round;
And she has sigh'd, and she has wept,
But ease has no where found.

* Brougham Castle, which stands on the borders of Westmoreland, near the banks of the river Emmont, and about two miles from Penrith, is a place with whose history I am perfectly unacquainted; only that I know at present it is one of the most spacious—and perhaps one of the most magnificent—ruins in the North of England.

"Ah, me! (she said,) was e'er before
So sad forlorn a wife,
For tho' I am Lord Herbert's spouse,
I lead a widow'd life.

"Twelve tedious months are past and gone
Since last he left these arms;
O'er distant shores he wins afar,
'Midst danger and alarms.

"Ye gentle gales, that round me blow,
Augmented by my sighs;
Oh gently waft him home again
To cheer these longing eyes.

"For here, with anxious sad distress,
My nights are pass'd away;
And cheerless solitude and grief
Attend me thro' the day.

"But, if the morning dawn were come,
Full quickly would I ride
To the weird woman, where she dwells
Close by the Black Fell * side.

* Part of a chain of mountains running on the East of Cumberland.

"There with her will I counsel take,
Her forecast's fam'd on far,
To know when he Lord Herbert shall
Forsake the cruel war."

Lord Herbert he on Syria's shores,
With martial squadrons sped,
With princely Edward to the fight
The Christian forces led.

Much by his prince approv'd was he,
Much by his peers renown'd;
For, thro' the host of Christian knights,
A braver was not found.

Destruction follow'd where he led,
And mark'd his furious course;
Nor could the Saracen's whole pow'r
Check his resistless force.

Up with the light rose Eleanor;
She's ta'en the swiftest steed,
And quickly she to Black Fell side
Has posted with all speed.

And soon she's gain'd the fated place,
And soon an entrance found;
And the weird woman soon has met,
For forecast far renown'd.

"O lady, say, (the beldam cried,)
What brings you here so soon?"
"I come, (dame Eleanor replied,)
From you to beg a boon;

"Which you must grant ere I depart,
Or else must go with me;
And as your bodings shall betide,
So shall your guerdon be."

"What wouldst thou have, sweet lady fair?
What wouldst thou understand?
For, be assured, what I can do
Thou freely may'st command."

"My husband, brave Lord Herbert, he
Now wins on Syria's plains;
Fain would I know his plight, and how
This warfare he sustains."

"Then back to Brougham you must hie,
(Replied the wither'd crone,)
And all that you would learn, shall there
To you be fully known.

"Spur on your palfrey with all speed,
Nor stop, nor make delay;
I shall be there as soon as you,
So, lady, post away."

Now Lady Eleanor, thus warn'd,
Has homeward turn'd her steed;
O'er hill and dale, o'er bog and bourne,
To Brougham with all speed.

And when she pass'd the castle-moat,
Who readier was to wait
Than the weird woman of Black Fell side,
All at the castle-gate!

And she has lighted from her steed,
And enter'd by the hall;
And she has to the chamber pass'd,
The sybil too withal.

And she has bolted fast the door
All with a silver pin,
That none without might hear or see,
And no one might come in.

"And now I'll tell thee, lady fair,
(The caitiff said with speed,)
What things must first be done, ere we
Can with our spell proceed.

"And first, with vinegar and meal
Yourself must knead a cake,
Which on the embers must be laid,
That it may slowly bake.

" Then hie to some south-running stream,
Of no man ask you leave,
But take your shift, and in the brook
There wash well the left sleeve. *

" Then haste you back, and hang the same
Before the fire to dry ;
What of the process yet remains,
We'll finish by and by.

" Wait till the castle-bell strikes One,
Nor dash'd nor daunted be,
For be assur'd that at that hour
Lord Herbert you shall see !"

Slow wind their way the tedious hours,
Slow pass'd the parting day ;
And anxious grew Dame Eleanor
At midnight's tardy stay.

The magic cake, the new-wash'd shift,
Were both before the fire ;
Whilst the weird woman mutt'ring sat
Her incantations dire.

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* See Burn's "Hallo E'en."

At length the castle-bell toll'd One!
  The stately mansion shook;
The doors were burst!—Lord Herbert stood
  With stern revengeful look.

In arms accoutred cap-a-pee,
  With sword and buckler bright;
And gaily harness'd, as became
  A gallant Christian knight.

And he has ta'en and turn'd the cake,
  That on the embers burn'd,
And eke the shift before the hearth
  As carefully has turn'd.

Then up and crew the shrill-voic'd cock,
  The sable and the grey,
Lord Herbert rush'd forth from the hall,
  Nor longer might he stay.

But, as with hasty stride he flew
  Forth at the chamber-door,
Lord Herbert in his hurry dropp'd
  His sword upon the floor.

And sythe was heard a hollow groan,
  And eke a mournful sigh;
The lady she took up the sword,
  And careful put it by.

But sadly sank the lady's heart
  Now that the shade was gone;
And sadly seem'd she to repent
  The deed that she had done.

Two ling'ring, anxious, irksome years
  A widow'd bride she mourn'd;
At length Lord Herbert with the Prince
  And England's pow'rs return'd.

Straight to the hall the baron flew,
  Nor made he stop or stay;
And Lady Eleanor, I ween,
  Was joyful on that day.

The costliest banquet was prepar'd,
  The minstrels shook the hall,
The copious bowl was push'd around,
  And mirth pervaded all.

For all to see the Lord's return,
  Express'd unfeign'd delight,
Whilst he resolv'd that ev'ry heart
  Should feel no care that night.

It chanc'd that on a future day
  Lord Herbert ranging round
The various chambers of the dome,
  His sword, ill-fated, found!

With horror he the weapon view'd,
  With rage and wild surprise;
For well he knew the luckless blade,
  Yet scarce could trust his eyes.

But swift he from the chamber hies,
  The faulchion in his hand,
And of fair Lady Eleanor
  Thus sternly does demand:

"Where got'st thou that fair sword, lady?
  Now tell me, on thy word;
From what young knight, or warrior wight,
  Dame, got'st thou that fair sword?"

"Why sternly dost thou thus enquire,
  Lord Herbert, this from me?
Within your armoury, good sooth,
  Great store of swords there be.

"Swords are not things for womens' use;
  Then why this question, say?
You look most angrily, my lord,
  What is the reason, pray?"

"Where got'st thou that fair sword, lady?
  Now tell me, on thy word;
From what young knight, or warrior wight,
  Dame, got'st thou that fair sword?"

"My lord, if I must say the truth,
And tell you, on my word,
I almost durst be bound to swear
It is my father's sword."

"No, no! 'tis not Lord Osrick's sword.
I know that blade too well;
Thou shalt not thus prevaricate,
But truth be forc'd to tell.

"Doth it become Lord Herbert's wife
To tamper him with lies?
Or doth it suit Lord Herbert's wife
His menace to despise?

"Where got'st thou that fair sword, lady?
Now tell me, on thy word;
From what young knight, or warrior wight,
Dame, got'st thou that fair sword?"

Then down upon her bended knees
Dame Eleanor did fall;
And, barring parley or disguise,
The lady told him all.

And loud did she for mercy call,
And smote her breast full sore;
Urg'd female curiosity,
But her affection more.

" Wretch that thou art! (Lord Herbert said,)
I knew the sword was mine!
Death is too slight a punishment
For such a fault as thine:

" When press'd by much superior force,
And sinking 'midst the fight,
You from my body tore my soul,
To glut your foolish sight!

" By witchcraft too!—detested thought!
Unpardon'd is the deed!
Mercy could not extend to thee,
Tho' angels' tongues should plead.

" Not all the torments hell contains,
That most the damn'd dismay,
Can parallel the pangs I felt
On that unhappy day!

" Whirl'd like a thunderbolt along,
O'er ocean, earth, and air,
O'er craggy steeps, and bri'ry breaks,
To rest I knew not where.

" Whilst all the time my body lay
On earth, devoid of breath!
And all around the battle press'd,
And threaten'd certain death.

"'Twas there, on first recov'ring life,
I vow'd, on knightly word,
That they should surely lose their lives
With whom I found the sword!

"And should I break my plighted oath?
Myself thus doubly curse?
When, on some future day, perhaps,
Thy spells might use me worse.

"No, 'tis resolv'd—thy doom is pass'd!
No suit can e'er succeed;
Revenge impels me to the act,
Nor justice blames the deed.

"Then die!"—so said, the fatal blade
Deep-pierc'd the shrieking wife!
She fell!—and at her husband's feet
Surrender'd up her life!



THE

EARTH KING.

" ARISE, Lord Aymer, arm with speed,
Thy country doth thy aid demand;
The hostile Scots have pass'd the Tweed,
And ravage fair Northumberland."

" Whence com'st thou, haughty herald, say,
With thy proud messages to me?
Such mandates I can ne'er obey,
Whoe'er the summoner may be.

" What tho' all Scotland be in arms,
Tho' Douglas marshal out the way,
And shake the borders with alarms,
Need I to mingle in the fray?

" In this embattled tower secure,
I mock the siege—assault defy;
The length'ning war I can endure,
Unreach'd by its calamity.

"Then hence, proud herald! haste, return!
And say to him that sent thee here,
That I the idle summons spurn,
Nor aught his future anger fear."

"Arise, Lord Aymer, arm with speed!
Thy country doth thy aid demand;
The hostile Scots have pass'd the Tweed,
And ravage fair Northumberland!

"'Tis the great Bolingbroke that sends,
By me, this message from afar;
For he hath summon'd all his friends
To aid him in the cruel war."

"This answer to thy master bring:
That I too long have borne his yoke;
And tell proud Henry, faithless king!
My fealty I here revoke.

"Is not the flower of all the land,
The fair, the gallant Hotspur slain?
He was my liege!—and, by this hand,
I ne'er am Henry's friend again!

"Tho' all the pow'rs of Scotland rise,
With Denmark and with Norway join'd;
Yet know, the mandate I despise
Of princes faithless and unkind!

"Once more tell Bolingbroke from me,
  That all allegiance I forego;
And, whatsoe'er his fortunes be,
  Lord Aymer is henceforth his foe!"

"Arise, Lord Aymer, arm with speed!
  Thy country doth thy aid demand;
The hostile Scots have pass'd the Tweed,
  And ravage fair Northumberland.

"Three times, Lord Aymer, have I said
  Arise, and arm thy pow'rs with speed;
Three times the legal summons made,
  And yet thou luckless tak'st no heed.

"It is great Bolingbroke's command—
  Great Bolingbroke thy rightful lord!
Then why thus foolishly withstand
  A mighty monarch's sov'reign word?"

"If he, the king of all the earth,
  Should bid me arm on this pretence,
I would not lead my people forth
  To fight in Bolingbroke's defence!

"Then get thee home, proud herald, go
  And tell thy king my firm intent;
That service I do others owe,
  Which once to him was only meant."

The messenger departed straight
To Henry's court, the news to bring;
Where he doth faithfully relate
Lord Aymer's answer to the king.

"Now, foul befall the traitor vile!
(King Henry said,) it grieves me sore;
By Grace! 'tis but a little while,
And he, Lord Aymer, is no more!"

Lord Aymer with the twilight rose,
And listless left his weary bed;
For there he might not find repose,
The herald's words so fill'd his head.

Full well King Henry's pow'r he knew,
As well he knew his deadly rage;
That where it menac'd to pursue,
No motive could its force assuage.

He's ta'en a charger from the stall,
Caparison'd all gaily bright;
And he has pass'd the outer hall
Before the morning it was light.

Along the winding banks of Tyne
He onward sped his wistless way;
"What means this boding heart of mine?
What means this heaviness to-day?"

And he's look'd east, and he's look'd west,
And he's look'd o'er the forest green,
And he's o'er moss and moorland press'd,
But man nor woman has he seen;

Till turning near the mountain's side,
Lord Aymer saw, with fix'd surprise,
A yawning cavern open wide,
And from the gulph strange figures rise!

High on a splendid chariot rais'd,
One sat that like a monarch seem'd,
Around him fulgent meteors blaz'd,
And from his eyes th' light'ning beam'd.

Volcanic vapours from his maw
He blew with pestilential breath:
Lord Aymer stood transfix'd with awe,
Expectant of immediate death.

His head was of the jasper bright,
His temples glist'ning to behold,
His ruby eyes shone like the light,
His locks were like the threads of gold.

His beard was like the sparkling glass,
An iron strength his neck confess'd;
His arms and shoulders were of brass,
And polish'd marble was his breast.

His legs and thighs, of giant size,
A strange amalgama display'd;
His ample hands, and feet likewise,
Of hardest, brightest steel were made!

A mantle of asbestos bright
Was o'er his ample shoulders flung;
While pendant, flashing like the light,
Close to his side the faulchion hung.

A groupe of spectres by his side
Attended, but with various mien;
Some bore their crests with haughty pride,
Some, writh'd with agony, are seen.

Lord Aymer stood with deadly fright,
His heart a thousand horrors fill'd;
For sure so wonderful a sight,
His eyes, till now, had ne'er beheld.

When onward whirling with his car,
That shook the earth, the spectre said,
With voice harsh bellowing from afar,
" Lord Aymer need not be dismay'd!

" Full well I know thy haughty soul,
Full well I know thy manly pride,
That scorns all human base controul,
And hath all earth-born pow'r defied.

" Know, I am King of all the Earth;
Nay, more, my empire is the sea!
Yet have I purposely rode forth,
Lord Aymer, to confer with thee.

" What is proud Bolingbroke, that he,
Usurper-like, thus lifts his hand,
To think that noble souls like thee
Would basely crouch at his command?

" Are not both he and all the rest
Of monarchs, that o'er mortals sway,
Mere vassals to my high behest,
And bound my summons to obey?

" What are the most illustrious kings?—
Ephemerons but of an hour!
Mere reptiles!—momentary things!
All tributary to my pow'r.

" Since time commenc'd, my throne has stood;
Uninterrupted been my reign;
No bold insurgent e'er thought good,
As yet, to grasp at my domain.

" Millions of millions, at my call
Obedient, my commands attend!
Ev'n mightiest princes prostrate fall
When I the mightier summons send!

"And yet throughout my vast domain
No mal-contented traitors be;
No factions shake my peaceful reign,
No subject wishes to be free!

"But here equality prevails,
Such as no other state can boast,
And birth or title nought avails,
Where ev'n distinction's self is lost.

"Then come, Lord Aymer, come with me,
The wonders of my realm survey;
I pledge myself no harm to thee
Shall happen in the devious way.

"What tho' destructive seems my breath,
Tho' light'nings in my eyes appear,
Tho' trembling mortals call me Death,
Lord Aymer, thou hast nought to fear.

"Ne'er damp thy manly fire with dread,
Ne'er fill thy bosom with alarm;
For know that, whilst thou hast a head,
Thou'rt perfectly secure from harm."

So said—high on the lofty seat,
The Earth King he Lord Aymer plac'd;
And, as the pinion'd light'ning fleet,
Their journey subterine retrac'd.

Swift as the air, the eagle's wing,
  Or driving bark the billow cleaves,
So yields the earth to the Earth King,
  And wide an easy entrance leaves.

Earth's inmost secrets lay disclos'd,
  The sparkling gem, the pond'rous ore,
A thousand splendours fair expos'd
  To mortal ken, unknown before.

Here mighty caverns, long conceal'd,
  Of gnomes and demons' drear abodes,
Are to Lord Aymer now reveal'd,
  With all the world of antipodes.

Extensive regions, deep and drear,
  With 'habitants as strange, they view,
By mortals never thought of here,
  Whose names geographers ne'er knew.

Here the vast fountains of the deep
  Elab'rate from the centre play;
And, like the heart, their motions keep
  Of flux and reflux night and day.

There from the inmost depths of hell
  The dire volcanic furnace gleams,
Where suff'ring fiends for ever yell
  In liquid flames and burning streams.

At length the central dome they gain,
Where his vast court the Earth King held
But who those wonders can explain,
Which all description far excell'd?

The dome was concave, like a sphere,
The shell of adamant was made;
And what to mortals happens here,
Was there most perfectly display'd.

"Behold my ministers around
(The monarch said) obedient stand;
See how in rev'rence profound
They wait to do my high command.

"They various offices perform:
One hurls the light'ning thro' the air;
One manages the billowing storm,
And scatters ruin and despair.

"A third the inundation tends,
Directs the deluge in its sweep,
Or from its base the mountain rends,
And hurls it headlong to the deep!

"The earthquakes are another's care,
The world convulses in his hand;
Whilst some the pestilence prepare,
And breathe destruction o'er the land!

"There Famine sits with meagre face,
With Luxury, who more destroys
Than all the rest of mortal race,
As he more winning arts employs."

"Here all the ills (Lord Aymer cried)
I've seen, that thro' creation rage;
Save one, I think I have not spied,
A far fam'd evil, call'd Old Age."

"Old Age (the King of Terrors said)
Has lately on an errand been;
But, so diminish'd is his trade,
He's very seldom to be seen.

"There was a time when Age alone
Was the supporter of my realm;
But now he is but little known
Since Luxury has ta'en the helm."

"But what are those (Lord Aymer said)
That toil so hard behind that screen;
They are conceal'd, as tho' their trade
Was secret, and might not be seen."

"Those are the Destinies, (said he)
The Fates that rule the outer world,
Their labours may no mortal see
Till I the curtain first have furl'd."

"But listen! (said the splendent king,)
  Hark to the Sisters there within;
Hark to the chorus that they sing,—
  It is the thread of life they spin.

"Thrice hail to thee, Lord Aymer, hail!
  Well hast thou on thy journey sped;
No pow'r against thee shall prevail
  So long as thou shalt wear thy head."

"What mean you by your mystic song?
  You speak equivocal and vain;
That may be short, or may be long;
  Therefore your promises explain."

"Arise, Lord Aymer! arm with speed,
  Thy own occasions most demand;
Arise! and haste beyond the Tweed,
  Nor linger in Northumberland."

Swift as an eagle thro' the air,
  The Earth King has Lord Aymer ta'en
Unto the place they met, and there
  Has brought and set him down again.

But; ah! how deadly pale he grew;
  His body shook, cold ran his blood;
He'd seen the Earth King, and he knew
  The meeting boded him no good.

And he has spurr'd his mettled steed,
And homeward to his castle sped,
And he has said his pray'rs and creed,
And heart-sick has he sought his bed.

" Why looks my noble lord so pale?
(Said Lady Agnes,) well-a-day!
What can the brave Lord Aymer ail,
Or what disturbs thy spirit, say?"

" Ah! lady, I am sick with woe,
Sunk is my heart—cold runs my blood!
I've seen the Earth King, and I know
The meeting bodes to me no good."

All-night he tumbled in his bed,
His pillow lent him no repose;
The Earth King still ran in his head,
And early in the dawn he rose.

Fair mounted on his gelding grey,
Lord Aymer wends to take the air,
To try among the woodlands gay,
By exercise, to banish care.

But as across the verdant sward,
With ruthless course he rang'd along,
Still in his ears he thought he heard
The fatal Sisters' mystic song.

And as thro' ev'ry town they pass,
  The tears they fell from many an eye;
The people cried—" What pity 'twas
  So fair a lord should basely die!"

As near to London town they draw,
  With fear Lord Aymer's body shook,
But when the fatal block he saw,
  All fortitude his soul forsook.

There, with infernal splendour dress'd,
  The fierce Earth King once more beheld;
The object quite unmann'd his breast,
  And all his soul with horror fill'd.

" Lord Aymer, thou shalt lodge with me
  This night! (the hideous spectre said;)
The song the Sisters sung to thee,
  Taught thee no caution for thy head!"

He basely to the block was led;
  The pensive crowd was standing by;
A solemn gloom the whole o'erspread,
  And tears were shed from many an eye!

The fatal axe is rais'd on high,
  The blow unerring swift descends!
Thus traitors commonly must die;
  And thus Lord Aymer's story ends.

LORD BALDWIN.

LORD Baldwin rose at early dawn,
And spurr'd his courser o'er the lawn,
To join the eager chace;
His onward way the baron took,
Along the banks of Caldew's brook;
But with no tardy pace.

The devious windings he pursued,
Till Warnell's tow'ring heights he view'd,
With forests mantled o'er·
Here he resolv'd his sports to take,
And from the close embow'ring brake
To drive the brindled boar.

Full sweetly smil'd the op'ning morn,
Full sweetly blew the echoing horn,
The landscape bloom'd around;
The baying hounds, with op'ning throats,
Return'd the huntsman's clam'rous notes;
The hills the whole resound.

Lord Baldwin spurr'd his mettled steed,
To join the party with all speed,
Devoid of vulgar fear:
Nor dimpling streams, nor swampy fen,
Nor tow'ring cliff, nor headlong glen,
Could check his bold career.

But as he turn'd the skirting wood,
Close by the margin of the flood,
A female form he spied.
Her features shone divinely fair;
Angelic seem'd the damsel's air,
As down the dale she hied.

Her eyes were of the heav'nly bright,
Her robes were of the purest white,
Her hair like threads of gold:
The fairest flow'r that ever grew
Might blush at her superior hue,
All lovely to behold!

Lord Baldwin, sudden stopp'd his horse,
Forgetful of the promis'd course,
To ask the damsel's name;
For in his life, the baron swore,
He ne'er as yet had seen before,
By far, so fair a dame.

The damsel she made no reply,
But bashfully seem'd hasting by,
Along the winding way;
"Nay, by my sooth! (Lord Baldwin said,)
You pass not thus my lovely maid—
A moment you must stay."

So said, dismounting from his steed,
He onward rush'd with fiery speed
To seize the beauteous fair!
But, nimble as the bird of chace,
She springs and shuns his fierce embrace—
He clasps the yielding air.

"Fair damsel say, why these alarms;
Why thus affrighted shun my arms?"
The baffled baron said;
I swear by all yon heav'ns above,
So fix'd, so ceaseless, is my love,
Thou need'st not be afraid.

"Then, damsel, doff thy foolish fear,
My declaration deign to hear,
Nor thus with panic start:
I swear that thou shalt be my bride,
If thou with this art satisfied,
And mistress of my heart."

"Lord Baldwin, (said the lovely dame,)
Right well I know thy rank, thy name,
Tho' I'm to thee unknown:
But how shall I thy tale believe,
So long accustom'd to deceive,
To perfidy so prone?

"Since Adelaide, thy once-lov'd wife.
Forsook this transitory life,
Has not, within thy dome,
Fair Emma been, much injur'd maid,
By faithless promises betray'd,
From honour and from home?

"How often has she heard you swear
Your love to her was all sincere!
How long has she believ'd!
Then say, Lord Baldwin, how can I
On these your promises rely,
Which her have so deceiv'd?

"And say, were I your wedded wife,
Could I submit to live in strife
With her, a rival there?
Or rather you, Lord Baldwin, say,
Could you remorseless turn away
The hapless injur'd fair?"

"Yes, by my sooth! (Lord Baldwin said,)
I promise thee, most beauteous maid,
Upon my knightly word;
Young Emma!—I'll discharge the fair,
No rival shall inhabit there,
That discord can afford.

"But say, (said he,) most lovely dame,
What is your family, your name?
Of these I wish to know;
If ought like this you ask of me,
My answer should be frank and free;—
As much to me you owe."

"No, no! (the lovely damsel cried,)
Until I am thy wedded bride,
That obligation wants;
A poor unskilful girl is she,
Who, while she holds her liberty,
Each ask'd for favour grants.

"Believe me, on my plighted word,
That, tho' thou art a titled lord
Of most illustrious line,
Yet I a pedigree can shew,
That ev'n ambition would allow
As eminent as thine."

"But why, (Lord Baldwin said,) sweetheart,
Why should not I, before we part,
Enjoy the fond embrace?"
"No, no, (said she,) some other time,
At present it would be a crime;—
This is no proper place."

"But tell me when and where (said he,)
Shall our next happy meeting be?
For sooth, my lovely fair!
I promise, by the Holy Rood!
Our nuptial contract to conclude
Demurless then and there."

"Ill would it suit me to be seen
To walk with you the forest green,
In vulgar slander's spite;
But, if my councils you regard,
I'll meet you in yon lone church-yard,
At twelve o'clock at night.

"Beneath the solitary yew,
Close screen'd from each observer's view,
Free converse we may hold;
What curious passenger would dare
To interrupt our meeting there?—
Not one would be so bold."

"Thanks for the terms that you propose,
(Lord Baldwin said,) my beauteous rose!
The meeting suits me well.
In yon church-yard, beneath the yew,
Conceal'd from each observer's view,
As midnight strikes the bell."

"Yes! at that hour, (replied the fair,)
That very place, just then and there,
No better could be found;
But how shall I be sure that you
To this appointment will be true,
By no engagement bound."

"Love, (answer'd he,) with him that loves,
A stronger obligation proves,
Than protestations are;
And could my fair one once dispute
The truth, the ardour of my suit,
'Twould drive me to despair.

"Here on my bended knee I vow,
No woman else on earth but you
Shall share my changeless love!
Fair lady! if thou wilt be mine,
Body and soul I will be thine,
As time shall better prove."

"Enough! (the lovely lady cried,)
Lord Baldwin, I am satisfied;
Nor fortune shall us sever;
Here do I swear, that I am thine,
Body and soul thou shalt be mine,
For ever, and for ever!"

Thus said, swift o'er the winding brook,
Her homeward way the damsel took,
Nor waited his reply;
He joins the chace with double glee,
(I ween, a well pleas'd wight was he,)
With thoughts of future joy.

But now their various pastimes o'er,
Lord Baldwin homeward hies once more
To taste the cheering bowl;
His bosom burns with strong desire,
Meanwhile determinations dire,
Are gath'ring in his soul.

Fair Emma, beauteous injur'd maid!
In youthful innocence betray'd,
By practices most base;
Had long the baron's heart engag'd,
But time that passion had assuag'd
And shunn'd was her embrace.

Thus oft too easy purchas'd joy
The libertine will soonest cloy,
And in aversion cease;
So Emma, once tho' dearly lov'd,
Now cruelly must be remov'd,
To suit her lord's caprice.

But how to manage this affair
Awhile employ'd the baron's care,
And kept his mind in doubt;
Dominion she too long had held
By easy means to be expell'd,
Or violence turn'd out.

Long time the subject he revolves,
At last on secrecy resolves,
Since better might not be;
For her he drugs the fatal bowl,
With baneful laurel poison foul;—
Thus, murder sets him free!

The night came on;—with passion fir'd
Lord Baldwin from his hall retir'd
Toward the church-yard drear;
Nor either did the place or time,
Or recently committed crime,
Impress his mind with fear.

Serene and peaceful was the night,
Clear shone the moon with silver light,
Whilst all was hush'd around;
No sound except the murm'ring stream,
No voice except the owlet's scream,
Disturb'd the calm profound.

At length the church-yard rose in view,
And full was seen the sable yew;
Sad melancholy free;
The midnight bell had not yet toll'd:
Lord Baldwin's blood was waxing cold;
No damsel could he see.

At length, with deep and solemn knell,
The dreary hour rang on the bell!
That moment, fair in view,
Lord Baldwin, by the moon's pale light,
A female view'd, in garments white,
Beneath the lonely yew.

Quick to the place the baron press'd,
Desire wild burning in his breast,
To moderation lost;
But soon his furious ardour fled,
His spirits sunk,—he hung his head,—
'Twas murder'd Emma's ghost!

" Accursed wretch! (the spectre said,)
Betraying, thou hast been betray'd;
Thy wiles have wrought thy woe!
Yon yawning grave, false man, behold!
Thy body it shall soon enfold,
For Heav'n awards it so.

" Think, monster! in that shorten'd time
Thou hast to live, upon thy crime;
Think, ere too late it be!
Short is thy journey to the tomb,
Near is thy everlasting doom!
Lord Baldwin, think on me!"

No more she spoke, but softly fled;
Lord Baldwin shook with inward dread,
For horror fill'd his mind;
With speed he quits the fatal spot,
Straight homeward hies, and saunters not,
Nor dares to look behind.

Clear shone the moon with silver light,
Serene and peaceful was the night,
And all was hush'd around;
No sound except the murm'ring stream,
No voice except the owlet's scream,
Disturb'd the calm profound.

When as Lord Baldwin nearer drew
His castle gate, there fair in view
A lovely damsel stood;
Her vestments all appear'd the same
As those worn by the beauteous dame,
Near Warnell's skirting wood.

"Shame fall your heart! (the damsel said;)
Why, could a weak and wanton maid
Affright Lord Baldwin so?
'Twas I that play'd the ghost, to try
Your courage; but, Lord Baldwin, why
Did you so quickly go?"

The crimson blush of shame o'erspread
The baron's cheek; his terrors fled,
And fondly he replied,—
"Come to my arms, thou charming one!
'Tis thou, and thou art fit alone
To be Lord Baldwin's bride!

"Come then unto my longing arms,
Nor cruelly withhold those charms,
Since nothing shall us sever;
For here I swear that thou art mine,
Body and soul I will be thine,
For ever and for ever!"

"Body and soul! (the lady cried,)
With that I am well satisfied,
The promise comes with grace;"
Then, as the vulture swift, she sprang,
And on his neck and bosom hung
With eager fix'd embrace.

"Avaunt! detested fiend of hell!
(The baron roar'd, with dreadful yell,)
What means this dev'lish strife!"
This was not she, the lady fair
Of Warnell-wood, so debonair,
But Adelaide, his wife!

Her fleshless arms his neck embrac'd,
Her putrid lips to his were plac'd,
Chill horror shook his soul;
Her smell was like the scorpion's breath,
Her icy touch was cold as death,
And horrible the whole.

"Shake off your fear, (the spectre said,)
What makes Lord Baldwin thus afraid!
Where is your courage fled?
Can he, who could destroy his wife,
Who reft poor Emma of her life,
Thus shake with childish dread?

"When sated with my bridal charms,
To take another to your arms,
What cruelty you us'd!
To me the poison'd bowl you gave,
And sent me to an early grave,
Degraded and abus'd.

"In love a second time with me,
The self-same cruel villainy
You practis'd with success:
Like mine, with you, was Emma's fate;
Short was your love—severe your hate;
Abandon'd to excess.

"What vice, what baseness has been thine,
Who laws, both human and divine,
Didst proudly set at nought!
By faithless protestations made,
What innocents hast thou betray'd,
To shame and ruin brought!

"But now, Lord Baldwin, at the last,
I have thee, and will hold thee fast;
On earth nought shall us sever:
Your oath was—By the pow'rs divine,
Body and soul I will be thine,
For ever and for ever!"

Lord Baldwin made her no reply ;
Pale grew his face, and dim his eye ;
His heart it throbb'd full sore :
At length, with an expiring yell,
He on the pavement lifeless fell,
And words spoke never more!

Yet often, as the rustics say,
Lord Baldwin takes his midnight way
Along the winding stream ;
Two female forms, array'd in white,
Pursue him thro' the live-long night,
And hoot with hideous scream !



THE

WITCH OF ESKDALE.

HAVE you heard of Ethelwolfa?
  Cruel witch of Eskdale nam'd;
Or her daughter Adelinda,
  For her peerless beauty fam'd?

Not the rose that on the mountain
  Breathes its fragrance to the air,
Nor the deeply-ting'd carnation
  Might their bloom with her's compare.

Such her charms were, each beholder
  Felt with instant love inspir'd;
And her form, angelic moulded,
  Might a santon's soul have fir'd.

But, alas! those fatal beauties
  Seem'd by hell, not heav'n, bestow'd;
For, within the fairest bosom,
  Sentiments the foulest flow'd.

She, the beldam base, her mother,
With her incantations foul,
Had with dev'lish pains corrupted
Adelinda's youthful soul.

With each mystery infernal
Was her infant bosom stor'd;
Taught to seek no other pleasure
But what vice and guilt afford.

She, the wicked Ethelwolfa,
Seem'd no happiness to know,
But in such as was derived from
Others wretchedness and woe.

Long thro' Cannoby remember'd,
Was her hellish influence fear'd,
For, in many a sad example,
Had her dreadful pow'r appear'd.

Not with common mischief sated,
Such as deluge, dearth, and storm,
Fairest forms to foulest monsters
Frequently would she transform.

Oft the mother's fondled darling
Scowls a sad mis-shapen spright,
And the hamlet's boasted beauty
Bed-rid shows a haggard sight.

Such was she, the witch of Eskdale,
  Such her daughter, as they say;
Such their pranks, as country legend
  Has recorded to this day.

On the winding banks of Leven,
  Liv'd (quoth legendary lore,)
Arribert, a noble Saxon,
  Much renown'd in days of yore.

Nor Bernicia, nor Deira,
  Might a braver champion boast;
Oft had he from Cumbrian borders
  Drove the plund'ring Pictish host,

Fair Oroda was his consort,
  To great Edwin near allied.
Thro' Northumbria's mighty kingdom,
  None could boast a fairer bride.

Angelina, lovely damsel,
  Was their daughter, she alone;
But, in point of female beauty,
  She has need to yield to none.

Albert, warden of the borders,
  Beauteous Angelina lov'd,
Nor by her, nor by her parents,
  Was that passion disapprov'd.

He was young, was rich, was handsome,
And, quoth chronicle, I ween,
Pair more lovely or more graceful
Happy Eskdale ne'er had seen!

Fair, but wicked Adelinda
Saw the youth—her female heart,
Tho' with arts infernal tainted,
Own'd Love's pow'rful piercing dart.

Each alluring wile she practis'd,
Albert's youthful heart to gain;
Blandishment and incantation
All were exercis'd in vain.

He her various arts resisted,
Shunn'd her with assiduous care;
Conscious charms so fascinating
E'en might Virtue's self ensnare.

Well he knew the fair enchantress'
Mighty pow'r, by arts most foul;
But her diabolic vices
Horrified his virtuous soul.

Yet he fear'd her fierce resentment,
Rouz'd by unrequited love;
Dreaded lest her mother's vengeance
Might his certain ruin prove.

Still he wish'd to seem unconscious
Of fair Adelinda's flame;
Fearful to provoke the anger
Of the love-sick slighted dame.

Adelinda mark'd his coolness,
Vain her artifices prove;
Well she knew his fix'd aversion,
Tho' she burns with bootless love.

Vengeful cruel Ethelwolfa
Mark'd her daughter's languid air,
Well, too well, she knew the secret,
And the cause of all her care.

She herself with lawless passion,
Fiercer, but as ill return'd,
Struggling sore 'twixt love and vengeance,
For brave Arribert had burn'd.

Wisely he her wiles avoiding,
From her pow'r awhile escapes;
Tho' with each allurement tempted,
In a thousand various shapes!

Prompted oft by lustful fury,
On his ruin she seems bent;
Yet her love, still interposing,
Stops her in her base intent.

But her Adelinda slighted,
Beauty's bloom—the mother's pride!
Now provok'd the furious beldam
More than ev'ry thing beside.

Ev'ry fonder soft sensation
Soon is chok'd with hellish gall;
Soon with ruin dire resolving,
Fell revenge on one and all!

Loudly howl'd the midnight tempest,
Dreadful was the light'ning's glare!
Whilst loud yells and horrid uproar
Seem'd to rend the troubled air.

Terror shook the neighb'ring country,
Ev'ry heart was fill'd with fear!
Soon 'twas known that Ethelwolfa
Rode the storm in wild career!

Morning light a hideous prospect
Sad presented thro' the dale;
Far and wide huge devastation,
Toss'd and tumbling 'midst the gale.

Refted was the forest's grandeur,
Scatter'd, strew'd, the mountain's side;
Floating herds of sheep and oxen
Check the progress of the tide.

But Lord Arribert's fair mansion
  Scene most shocking yet displays;
From the top to the foundation,
  All appear'd one common blaze!

Piteous shrieks and lamentations
  Loudly rang the castle round;
But, where 'midst such sad confusion,
  Where was succour to be found?

Wrapp'd in wonder, each beholder
  Scarce possess'd of life appear'd;
When a sound, more loud and hideous,
  From the battlements was heard!

'Twas as if a host of demons
  Had with hellish mirth begun,
To applaud, in peals of laughter,
  All the mischief they had done!

When with merriment infernal
  These had hooted, laugh'd their fill,
With loud thunders all was ended,
  In an instant all was still!

Forth now from the dreadful castle,
  Wrapp'd so late in circling flame,
Arribert, with his Oroda,
  To the outer portal came.

But, alas! the woeful morning,
He no longer views the light;
Having been by foul enchantment
Quite divested of his sight!

And the beauteous Angelina,
All their hope, their only care,
She was gone, amidst the tempest,
She was gone, but none knew where!

Albert, too, within the castle
Lay that night in sleep profound;
Yet, tho' they had search'd each chamber,
He was no where to be found.

No, the cruel Ethelwolfa
Show'r'd on both her hellish hate;
Both, tho' guiltless, doom'd to suffer,
Both—tho' each a diff'rent fate.

Arribert in deep affliction
Mourn'd his loss of sight full sore;
But both he and fair Oroda
Mourn'd their Angelina more.

Albert too they much lamented,
But all sorrow was in vain;
For of them nor tale nor tidings,
Far or near could they obtain!

In each glen and gloomy grotto,
  Caves and caverns under ground,
Long they sought to little purpose—
  No where could the fair be found.

Arribert, with his Oroda,
  Many a day in wand'ring pass'd;
Still in hopes their Angelina
  Haply might be found at last.

One day, as forlorn they wander'd,
  High on Christenbury-crag,
There they met with Adelinda,
  Daughter of the cruel hag.

"Arribert with thy Oroda,
  Turn! (the fair enchantress said;)
This way comes my cruel mother,
  In her hand the fatal blade.

" Turn with speed, nor stand to parley,
  Danger presses on thy stay:
Certain woe, perhaps destruction,
  Must attend thy onward way.

" 'Tis no joy to me, believe me,
  Here to witness thy distress;
Rather than increase thy anguish,
  Gladly would I make it less.

"Kindly witch, (said he,) thy warning
Carefully let me regard;
In some future day thy kindness
Arribert may yet reward."

Thus he said, and cautious turning,
Groping forward with his staff,
From behind him Adelinda
Rais'd a fiend-like hideous laugh.

"Fool, (she said,) what peerless phrenzy
Prompts thy mind to thank me so;
Think'st thou Ethelwolfa's daughter
Can befriend a mother's foe!

"Fool! to think, that I, the daughter,
Duty should so far disclaim;
No! whate'er my mother's interests,
Adelinda's are the same."

At that instant, close behind him,
Ethelwolfa furious stood;
As the bear Hyrcanean, thirsting
For the helpless heifer's blood.

O'er his head her falchion shaking,
Dire destruction to presage
Loud she scream'd each dreadful menace,
Whilst she boil'd with hell born rage,

Steep and dang'rous was the passage,
  Where they stood, as trav'lers know;
High the fall, whilst Leven's waters
  Loudly dashing foam'd below.

Imps of hell! he loudly thunder'd,
  Thus with you I share my death;
Seizing both, he headlong tumbl'd
  To the bellowing gulph beneath.

At that moment near the bottom,
  Rushing from a bushy brake,
With reiterating hissings,
  Roll'd a large tremendous snake.

Round the neck of Ethelwolfa,
  And of Adelinda fair
Swift it wreaths its coils resistless,
  Loudly hissing thro' the air.

Forward o'er the craggy margin,
  Heedless of each piteous scream,
On the hideous serpent hawls them,
  Headlong to the turbid stream.

Arribert, tho' he attended
  In the deep and dang'rous fall,
Lighting on the twain beneath him,
  Had receiv'd no hurt at all.

As he rose, a voice shrill sounding,
  From the stream distinctly roar'd;
Haste! oh haste! the time is precious—
  Arribert, secure the sword!

Aided by his better genius,
  On the sword his hand he laid,
And, obedient to the summons,
  Held secure the fatal blade.

Sudden on his eye-balls streaming,
  Gush'd the rays of welcome light;
And all gay his lovely daughter
  Angelina stood in sight.

Wild with grief, in hast Oroda
  Down the steep her dang'rous way
Sought, supposing at the bottom,
  Her dear husband lifeless lay.

But what pleasure and amazement
  Must the scene at once afford
Angelina to discover.
  And her husband's sight restor'd!

"Whence, ah! whence, my Angelina,
  Hast thou sprung? (the mother said;)
In what cavern, dark and dreary,
  Hast thou dwelt, my pretty maid?"

" In no cavern have I shelter'd,
But amidst yon bushy brake ;
I, your daughter Angelina,
Was but now a hideous snake.

" But bring on the sword, dear father ;
Yet there's wond'rous work to do;
Many more unhappy victims
Their deliv'rance claim from you."

To a cavern then she led him,
Deep within the yawning rock ;
Where a scene of horror offer'd,
Cruelty itself might shock.

Here reclin'd on stony couches,
Many a lord and lady gay,
Richly rob'd, but void of motion,
In profoundest slumbers lay.

" Strike, oh strike ! (said Angelina,)
Strike the bell—but once,—no more ;
Once too sound that winding bugle,
And the whole enchantment's o'er."

Loud he rang the sounding tocsin,
Loud he blew the echoing horn,
Dire convulsions shook the cavern,
As if with an earthquake torn.

Darting from their death-like slumbers,
  Up arose the various train;
Gazing round in wild confusion,
  To behold the light again!

Joy in ev'ry face sat smiling,
  All in gratitude were loud;
But best pleas'd seem'd Angelina,
  Finding Albert in the crow'd.

He of slighted Adelinda
  Had endur'd the wrath alone;
By her chang'd into a statue,
  As she deem'd his heart of stone.

But this well-tim'd blest redemption,
  Which to all deliverance gave,
Cheer'd each heart, while, pleas'd and thankful,
  Soon they quit th' enchanted cave.

Albert soon, in happy nuptials,
  Join'd with Angelina gay;
And in Eskdale, blest and happy,
  Liv'd the pair for many a day.



THE FOUNDLING.

LOOK where yon cottage stands so humbly neat,
Oft the tir'd pilgrim's welcome snug retreat;
Whether from summer's heat, or parching drought,
Or wintry blasts, he kindly shelter sought.
The tempting sign to entrance did provoke,
And time was shorten'd by the landlord's joke.
The nut-brown ale, and hostess' courteous smile,
Serv'd the dull hour of ling'ring to beguile.
For complaisance was ever seen to wait
On those who deign'd a visit at their gate.
With rural neatness was the mansion dress'd,
Which gave the liquor still a double zest.
And so well pleas'd were all who chanc'd to stay,
That none e'er pass'd—who came again that way:
But now low laid is this industrious pair,
And ceas'd is both their courtesy and care.
Beneath yon hillock, where the myrtles wave,
This couple lie interr'd within one grave;
Strange was their destiny, unkind their fate,
But hush! till I their history relate.

Near where yon distant mountains tow'ring rise,
And Skiddaw's summit seems to pierce the skies,
Liv'd Farmer Harrowood, an honest boor,
A man nor very rich, nor very poor.
A farm he had, indeed it was but small,
A horse, two cows, some sheep, and that was all:
Yet, he respected by his neighbours was,
Who think of what man is, not what he has;
For 'tis not in the lowly vale of life
As in the higher spheres, where pride and strife,
With swoll'n ambition, occupy the great,
And merit rests on eminence and state.
No! Farmer Harrowood was honest deem'd,
And was for virtue more than wealth esteem'd;
To cultivate with care his little stock,
Or on the mountain side, to tend his flock,
Was nearly all his labour, all his care—
His heart for wishes had no time to spare.
The body's labour still engag'd the mind,
And health was still with exercise combin'd.
It chanc'd the Farmer rose one morn in May,
And to his labour took his wonted way.
In merry mood, he cheerly trudg'd along,
And carol'd to himself a homespun song;
When suddenly he heard, with fix'd surprise,
Distinct and near, a whining infant's cries.
He look'd about—and nestling on the ground,
Beneath the hedge a new-born infant found.

Naked it was, save that a rag was roll'd
Around its limbs, to shield it from the cold:
Mov'd with amazement at th' uncommon scene,
The farmer look'd quite thunderstruck I ween;
Yet, as his bosom pity ever knew,
He stood not long in pond'ring what to do;
But from the earth the sprawling infant rears,
And to his wife the curious off'ring bears;
To whom, as it had pleas'd omniscient heav'n,
No offspring of her own had e'er been giv'n.
To her the husband tells the wond'rous tale,
Perhaps the strangest thing e'er happen'd in their
dale;
No jealous doubt the rustic dame alarms,
But pleas'd, she takes the foundling to her arms,
And with a mother's fondness, and her cares,
Each necessary speedily prepares.
Soon garments proper for its rank are bought,
Whilst, as assiduously, a nurse is sought.
Its wants their joint attention seem'd t' employ,
And Rowland was the name they gave the boy.
Fast thro' the neighb'ring vales the tidings run,
That Farmer Harrowood had got a son.
The case mysterious vex'd each rustic's brain,
And wild conjecture guess'd—but guess'd in vain.
Some thought of this one, others thought of that,
And Rowland was the theme of ev'ry chat.
Ne'er heed be he of high or humble race,
The child was healthful, and improv'd apace.

First, by degrees, begins to lisp and talk,
And then progressively attempts to walk ;
Next in his fosterfather's hand he goes,
And calls him sire—as he no other knows ;
Still rip'ning onward, see him now ascend
The mountains, and his fleecy charge attend ;
For, ever pliant to his sire's controul,
T' obey seem'd all the pleasure of his soul.
  Industrious, careful, honest, and sincere,
He to his neighbours, as his friends, was dear;
Whilst not a youth that rang'd the sylvan grove,
But what solicited young Rowland's love:
Nor was he ever in his friendship shy,
As to oblige seem'd to increase his joy ;
Nor could the youthful beauties of the place,
With unconcern, view his engaging face.
A manly comeliness, tho' but a child,
Sat on his brow, and o'er each feature smil'd.
Mix'd with a soft engagingness and ease,
That seem'd adapted ev'ry heart to please.
In fine, by either sex he was approv'd,
The males commended, and the females lov'd.
  Amongst the various damsels of the dale,
The beauteous boast of Keswick's lovely vale,
Was Marg'ret, loveliest of the rustic train
Who sport at ev'ning on the daisied plain.
Her sparkling eye with softest lustre shone,
Her cheeks were like the rose-bud newly blown.

Her limbs seem'd form'd in nature's fairest mould,
And her whole frame was beauteous to behold.
Base born she was, the truth we must record,
For all depends upon the author's word.
Veracity historians should observe,
Nor from the paths of truth affect to swerve:
Her mother was a low-bred country dame,
(As one would say,) of no exalted fame;
But, whether by seduction's wiles o'erthrown,
Or from propensity to lewdness prone,
Is what I am not able here to say,
As 'tis a matter doubtful to this day.
But this we know, the child was born in shame,
Tho' from the world she kept the father's name.
The parish nurs'd the girl, who grew apace,
And, as she wax'd in years, improv'd in grace.
But no more like the dame that gave her birth,
Than melancholy is a-kin to mirth;
For she was modest as a cloister'd nun,
And chaste as Dian, sister of the sun.
And Farmer Jobson says, and says 'tis true,
A finer girl than her he never knew;
For she with him was servant seven long years,
As by her own indenture still appears;
And whilst she serv'd him he declares, that still
Her chiefest pleasure seem'd to be his will.
Polite to all she met, she won, no doubt,
Th' esteem of all the neighbours round about.

Well, be it so, 'tis meet we forward speed,
And to the marrow of our tale proceed.
Full fifteen years o'er Marg'ret's head had hurl'd,
Since she'd been usher'd to the busy world
At which said period, ev'ry blooming grace
That youth can boast sat pictur'd in her face;
Oft had her eyes on Rowland fix'd their stare,
Unconscious of the cause that kept them there.
Of love she little knew except the name—
Strange to the cause, altho' she felt the flame.
Yet, still she gaz'd on Rowland with delight,
And felt uneasy when not in her sight.
Meanwhile the youth had now attain'd sixteen,
By far the sprucest stripling on the green;
With him not one of all the rural throng
Could run so fast, or hold it out so long;
With such dexterity could leap the mound,
Or tumble heels o'er crupper on the ground.
In all these puerile feats he far excell'd,
Nor was unenvied by his peers beheld;
Who all with equal emulation fir'd,
To match at least, if not surpass, aspir'd.
At ev'ning, when the labours of the day
Were ceas'd, and twilight gave the village play;
With jocund heart he'd haste him to the ring,
And with his neighbour-youths would dance and sing;
Yet, when he sported 'midst the happy host,
Of all the nymphs, he notic'd Marg'ret most.

With mark'd attention he beheld each grace,
Each rising beauty in her blushing face;
Watch'd all her movements with assiduous care,
And all her pains and pleasures seem'd to share.
Change where she would, or saunter here or there,
He still was happiest when she was most near;
And when dark night proclaim'd their ending sport.
Tho' e'er so long to him, the time seem'd short.
If e'er he went by chance to Maudlin Fair,*
No sport he found if Marg'ret were not there.
But fraught with nick-nacks homeward soon he hied,
With ev'ry thing, save her, dissatisfied.
Thus long with passion combating they strove,
Each fearful to reveal their smother'd love;
Which, stifled thus, but with more ardour burns,
And ev'ry effort of concealment spurns,
Till bursting forth it baffles all controul,
And each to each confess'd their secret soul.
Long had their neighbours mark'd their mutual love,
Nor one their flame could justly disapprove.
Their equal fortunes, and their equal age,
All seem'd a happy union to presage;
None could object to diff'rence of estate,
So like their persons, and so like their fate.
And ev'ry body thought, who thought could spare,
There could not well be found a nicer pair.

* An annual fair held at Keswick.

Whilst Farmer Harrowood was pleas'd to th' life,
And swore that Marg'ret should be Rowland's wife!
And in his will, so well he lik'd the lad,
He would bequeath him ev'ry thing he had.
Meanwhile the years on tardy pinions flew,
Whilst stronger their commutual passions grew.
At length a day was fix'd to solemnize
Their nuptials, and complete their long-wish'd joys.
The news diffus'd a joy throughout the dale,
And ev'ry youth was gladden'd with the tale.
The morn arriv'd—in gayest vestments dress'd,
The rustic groupe towards the bridal press'd,
All equally desirous to attend.
As ev'ry swain to Rowland was a friend,
And ev'ry nymph th' esteem of Marg'ret shar'd,
So all the village, on that morn prepar'd
To celebrate with joy the festive day,
Where smiles illum'd each face, and ev'ry heart was gay.

The Gordian knot was tied—the happy pair,
Escorted by their train, from church repair
To Farmer Jobson's house, who had supplied
A dinner, for the love he bore the bride!
Here simple dainties in abundance made
A feast unmix'd with lux'ry or parade.
The sparkling ale in goblets stream'd around,
And merriment the guileless banquet crown'd.

The dinner done, the cheerful throng withdrawn,
Prepare their gambols on the daisied lawn;
Where dulcet sounds of music echoing round,
A doubling chorus from the hills resound.
At length the jovial party, ev'ning come,
'Gin each to think of their respective home:
The pair they wish all happiness and health,
With handsome children, and increase of wealth.
Each farmer cordial shakes his neighbour's hand,
And from the green retire the jocund band.
Young Rowland with his blushing Marg'ret goes
To Jobson's house, the bridal scene to close.
A few selected friends attend him there,
And with him all the joys of ev'ning share;
Till night now far advanc'd, the bridegroom led
Young Marg'ret from amidst the throng to bed.
Here at friend Jobson's house a week they stay,
Who former service wishful to repay,
Three ewes selects, the fairest of his flock,
And to the bride presents, to found her stock;
With promises of favours yet to come,
As soon as they got settled once at home.
Young Rowland, ever careful in his schemes,
Had sav'd, whilst in his servitude, it seems,
By wagers won, and various other ways,
A sum, in time, might independence raise.
Nor long his hours in indolence he pass'd,
For, looking round each day, he found at last

A place close by, quite answ'ring to his plan;
And now he deem'd himself a happy man.
Here soon he shifts, and stocks his little farm,
And, as the road was near, thought it no harm
To keep a public-house; as, by that chance,
He hop'd his little fortune to advance:
And on his sign inscrib'd the humble tale,
That here was sold—"Good Porter, Beer, and
Ale!"
In this his warmest wishes were excell'd,
His house with customers was daily fill'd.
The landlord's courtesy allur'd each guest,
And all the goodness of his ale confess'd;
Whilst ev'ry trav'ler, with his welcome fain,
Promis'd to call whene'er he came again.
Thus happiness appear'd to bless their days,
And thus success attended on their ways.
No feuds domestic vex'd their frugal life,
The husband happy—and content the wife.
That love, which in wild passion first begun,
Wore into friendship, as it onward run.
In six short years six children's smiles they share,
As Rowland, mild, and as their mother, fair.
But how evanescent are earthly joys,
How soon Misfortune's touch each hope destroys,
How soon our fairest prospects are o'erthrown,
And dire Despair usurps Hope's radiant throne!—
It chanc'd, one wintry day, quite wet and cold,
That Marg'ret's mother, feeble grown, and old.

Set down the vale, in slow unequal trot,
To pay a visit to her daughter's cot.
For, tho' conceiv'd in guilt, and born in shame,
Dear to the parent was the daughter's name.
Fast fell the rain, the hurricane blew strong,
As Magdalen, all storm-struck, trudg'd along.
Scarce could she combat with the baffling blast,
And in the mire her feet were oft stuck fast.
At length she reach'd the place, but so o'ercome,
She scarce could gain the portal of the dome.
She knock'd—the ready door wide open flew;
But how was Marg'ret thunderstruck to view
The hapless parent of her lawless birth
Exhausted, pale, and sinking to the earth!
Tho' Marg'ret never knew a mother's care,
At least of kindness had but little share,
Yet filial piety her bosom warms,
And, taking the poor wand'rer in her arms,
She bore her gently, tho' bedaub'd with mire,
And plac'd her in a chair before the fire.
There, with officious care, a cordial brings,
And ministers revivifying things;
With anxious hopes to stop the fleeting breath,
And snatch her from the yawning jaws of death.
The daughter's kindly care, the genial flame,
Recover'd partially the shiv'ring dame.
But death's cold hand had grasp'd about her heart,
And life seem'd stagnant in each vital part.

And tho' affection might with nature strive,
It certain seem'd she could not long survive;
Convinc'd herself of her approaching end,
Them she entreats a moment to attend;
Ere she surrender'd to all-conquering fate,
To what she then was labouring to relate;
But begg'd, that to the world might ne'er be known,
What was of consequence to them alone!
They hush'd—th' expiring beldam thus begun:
" Draw near, my daughter, and attend, my son—
Both children of my womb! say, whilst I live,
Can you this peerless cruelty forgive?
If so, 'twould rather ease my parting soul,
And soothe a conscience with offences foul!
Brother and sister by one sire you are,
One common mother too, in me, you share!
A lawless libertine your father, he
Seduc'd, betray'd, and then deserted, me!
Thee, Rowland, first I bore; and 'twas my aim,
By thy exposure, to conceal my shame;
For I so artfully the world beguil'd,
No mortal ever knew I was with child!
But, Marg'ret, ere with thee I'd pregnant been
Six months, my guilt was evidently seen!
But, oh! I faint! the icy hand of death
Suspends each faculty, and stops my breath!
Oh! can you, can you pardon, ere I die?"——
She ceas'd—no more but one expiring sigh.

But say, what pencil shall describe the look
That of the hapless pair possession took!
Silent in grief, both petrified they stood,
Whilst horror fix'd their looks, and chill'd their
blood!
The awful pause at length poor Rowland broke;
And thus unto his consort-sister spoke:
"O Marg'ret! how shall I this blow survive?
It were in vain with Destinyto strive;
I feel more agonies than tongue can tell!
The damn'd reflection drives me down to hell!
Incest!—Perdition!—Heav'n can ne'er forgive
The monstrous wretch! and suffer him to live!
O cruel, cursed mother!—damn the tongue,
In telling us the secret kept so long!
Why, if thy silence saunter'd to this time,
Might we not live unconscious of the crime?
Why not, when guiltless of that damning fact,
Could she have spoke, and stopp'd th' infernal act?
But now to come, when all the crime was past,
And make us doubly miserable at last!
Guilt was not ours till conscious of th' offence,
And tho' we err'd, 'twas but in innocence!
Pure was our love, reciprocal the flame,
In childhood nurtur'd, and thro' life the same.
Happy in each, till her foul ravings first
Show'd us our sin, and made us doubly curs'd!"
Thus storm'd the injur'd husband and the son,
Whilst from his tongue loud execrations run!

Wild phrenzy shook his frame ! all reason fled ;
And one short week beheld him with the dead!
Poor Marg'ret longer bore her hapless part,
A year she pin'd, but sorrow broke her heart !*

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* The foregoing story, however romantic it may appear, is notwithstanding too certainly a fact, which happened in the west of Cumberland, since the commencement of the nineteenth century.



SIBERT AND ELEANOR.

A TALE OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

ARGUMENT.

SINCE writing the following story, I have met with one in Boccace's Decameron, which very much resembles it. The Italian, however, has this difference, that, after the horrid eclaircissement, he makes his Lady leap out of the window. The description of Sicily, and of Ætna, is little more than a translation of a passage in the third book of Virgil's Æneid; though I had not an opportunity, when this story was written, of referring to that poet, being forced to depend in this, as in every other piece, merely upon my own recollection.

NEAR where the lofty heights of Hartside rise,
Whose tow'ring cliffs salute its neighbour skies,
In days of yore a stately mansion stood
Close to the margin of Tyne's winding flood;
Where liv'd, if rightly I relate my tale,
A wealthy knight, Sir Edred of the Dale.
One only daughter was his only care
And equal pride, young Eleanor the fair:
Bless'd with each charm that nature can impart,
And form'd alike to captivate each heart,
Gentle she was, as is the tender dove,
And ev'ry action but excited love.

Full many a baron brave and wealthy thane
Sought the fair hand of Eleanor to gain;
But she to all alike indiff'rence paid,
Save Sibert who alone engag'd the maid.
No lands had he, no title, and no fame,
Low his descent, and as obscure his name!
Yet native beauty flush'd his youthful face,
And form'd he was with ev'ry manly grace;
His courage ne'er was known to turn aside,
Nor paid respect to insolence or pride.
It chanc'd on bus'ness oft young Sibert sent,
By neighbouring gentry, to Sir Edred's went;
For such was his politeness and address,
That none were sham'd the stripling to caress.
Thus, at the baron's house, still frank and free,
Oft had he time fair Eleanor to see.
She, too, beheld the youth with fond delight,
Nor easy felt when he was from her sight.
Thus seem'd one common flame to fire each breast,
And each to each that passion soon confess'd.
A sad disparity there was, 'tis true,
'Twixt him and her, which well young Sibert knew.
But love impartial little def'rence shows
To rank, nor more respect to these than those.
His own remarks to Sibert soon made known,
That he was pleasing to the maid alone.
Thus, happy in their loves, the moments pass'd
On downy wings, till Destiny at last

Threaten'd all hopes of pleasure to suspend,
That now their happy intercourse should end;
And each thro' future life be doom'd to share
A changeless series of distress and care.
Far to the North, where Tyne his current pours,
And, passing, waters bleak Northumbria's shores,
A wealthy baron liv'd, well known to fame,
Near Adrian's wall, Sir Hildebrand his name:
Extensive were the lands that he possess'd,
And num'rous baronies his pow'r confess'd.
Amongst the groupe who their addresses paid,
From various views, to Eleanor, fair maid,
Came Hildebrand—his suit Sir Edred heard,
And sordidly to all the rest preferr'd:
His vast domains were arguments alone
By which all other claims were easily o'erthrown;
And with the parent these sufficient prov'd;
Each obstacle besides was soon remov'd.
A daughter's happiness, a friend's distress,
Were ne'er consider'd, and a lover less.
Love with ambition has but little part,
As little still affects the sordid heart.
Sir Edred view'd aggrandizement alone,
All else were trifles, foolish, and unknown.
By such a union his was sure to be
The mightiest house in all the North country.
With heartfelt grief fair Ellen heard the tale,
But sighs or sorrow little can avail.

'Tis not for her her destiny to choose,
This husband to prefer, or that refuse.
Alike in vain remonstrance and debate,
The father's fiat is the daughter's fate.
Tears and expostulations useless prove,
Or claims of pity, or of prov'n love.
Each gentler argument must now give way
To sordid av'rice, and confess its sway.
Fair Ellen, at her ruthless sire's command,
To one she hates must give her heartless hand!
Rent with despair, the sad unhappy maid
At midnight seeks the solitary shade;
And, hopeless of all solace and relief,
She to the forest tells her tale of grief.
With bootless lamentation fills the grove,
And loud complainings of her luckless love;
While the surrounding rocks and murm'ring stream
Re echo back the melancholy theme.
Young Sibert haply passing thro' the shade,
Chanc'd to o'erhear the sadly-sorrowing maid.
His Ellen's voice full well the lover knew,
And to the place with swift impatience flew.
Enquir'd the cause of her uncommon grief,
And kindly sought to minister relief.
To him she told the tale of her distress,
Nor was the youth at hearing anguish'd less.
Despair his bosom rack'd with mingling ire,
His tongue vociferated vengeance dire.

They kiss'd, they wept, bemoan'd their hapless state,
And curs'd the authors of their wayward fate;
But vainly their misfortunes they deplore,
Soon they must part, and part to meet no more!
A tender last adieu they sadly took,
As each reluctantly the grove forsook;
But ere the lovers left the lonely place,
Or ere they sever'd from the last embrace,
Young Sibert pledg'd a vow and firmly said,
"Of this be confident, thou beauteous maid,
Dead or alive, successful or o'erthrown,
My heart shall still be thine, and thine alone."
Thus from those pleasing scenes of youthful love,
The beauteous Eleanor must now remove,
And, in obedience to her wedded lord,
To grace a mansion which her soul abhorr'd.
Thirlwall, the place of gothic pile and rude,
On the bleak confines of Northumbria stood;
Close on one side the Pictish wall extends,
Which to the westward near the Solway ends;
And to the eastward, passing on the line,
Ends near the efflux of the river Tyne.
Lonely and bleak, the station still has been,
As by its vestiges may yet be seen.
Here with Sir Hildebrand, the hapless dame,
Fair Eleanor, a bride all mournful came;
Grandeur was there; but say, can this bestow
Joy to the mind where sits a settled woe?

No! 'twas not here her agitated mind,
In gloomy grandeur, pleasure hop'd to find.
Deep-rooted grief sat pictur'd in her face,
The roses from her cheeks retir'd apace;
Dejection mark'd each action of her life,
And, tho' a bride, she seem'd a widow'd wife.
Sir Hildebrand observ'd her secret woe,
He knew the cause, nor more desir'd to know.
But since not love incited him to wed,
A sullen cheerless life with her he led;
A secret jealousy possess'd his mind,
At best not much to gentleness inclin'd.
And thus that grief her bosom felt before,
By his unkindness now increas'd the more,
And all her days and nights, with care o'ercast,
In silent sad solicitude are past;
No friend a kindly comfort to impart,
Or sooth the sorrows of her anguish'd heart.
   Young Sibert, when he left his love-lorn fair,
In all the anguish of desponding care,
Madden'd with rage, by disappointment torn,
Awhile he wander'd thro' the land forlorn.
Absorb'd in all the mis'ry of thought,
Listless of where he went, or what he sought;
It chanc'd that then along the southern coast,
Britannia's pow'rs were drawn, a numerous host.
In all the glare of martial pomp array'd,
With their proud ensigns gaudily display'd;

Their vessels further than the eye could reach,
A floating forest stretch'd along the beach.
The lion-hearted Richard bore command,
Of the vast armament upon the strand,
Which were ere long to seek the Holy Land;
For now the banner'd cross was rais'd on high,
Crusade the watchword, and the common cry.
All Christendom pours forth in hostile swarms,
Saints and assassins all are cas'd in arms,
And each his fortune seeks in Palestine,
Amid the fight with mighty Saladine.
Gay look'd the sons of Britain's hardy race,
Whilst martial ardour flush'd each soldier's face;
And all impatient wait the fav'ring gale,
And ling'ring signal for their fleets to sail.
With these young Sibert bravely volunteer'd,
Nor stormy waves, nor hostile armies, fear'd;
But hopes at least, 'midst oriental foes,
If not to win renown, to lose his woes.
E'vn death itself to him no horror bears,
Since worse than death his present state appears;
'Reft of his Eleanor, all pleasure fled,
Fast on his health care like a canker fed.
Yet, tho' thus doom'd to visit her no more,
Again to heav'n the faithful Sibert swore,
That neither time nor place should once estrange
His thoughts from her, or his affections change.
But, tho' thus cruelly compell'd to part,
She still should be the mistress of his heart.—

Fair blew th' auspicious winds; the troops on board;
The signal made, the squadrons were unmoor'd;
The swelling canvas rustles in the breeze,
And swift the vessels glide along the seas.
Amongst the rest, he desp'rate joins the host,
To try his fortune on the Syrian coast.
Now o'er the seas the fleets impatient glide,
Now ply their sounding oars—now ste mthe tide;
Now headlong drive before the steady gale,
And now by turns unreef or shorten sail.
Whilst far extended o'er the azure deep,
The lengthen'd navy bears with ample sweep;
And now they reach Sicilia's far-fam'd isle,
Within whose ports they rendezvous awhile.
And with Mysenean cheer the troops prepare,
To brave the dangers of the coming war.
  Not far from here terrific Ætna lies,
Whose spiky summit rears above the skies,
Perpetual verdure smiles around its base,
Whilst everlasting snows its tops embrace.
Beneath, volcanic fires its caverns rend,
Whilst high in air the mounting flames ascend;
With roar tremendous, whilst the burning tide
Carries dire devastation far and wide;
And mingling streams of flame, and heavier stone,
Are o'er the isle in dreadful torrents thrown;
Enceladus, as ancient fables prove,
O'ercome by the omnipotence of Jove,

For waging proud rebellion with the skies,
Transfix'd beneath the pond'rous mountain lies;
And, when he turns his weary side to ease,
Convulsions dire its inmost caverns seize;
And from its yawning mouths destruction pours,
Which, hurl'd in air, descends in flaming show'rs;
And headlong bearing down with hideous blaze,
The torrid cat'ract rolls by diff'rent ways.
Then forests, cities, populace, and all,
In undistinguish'd ruin sadly fall;
Whilst clouds of suffocating ashes toss'd
In air, obscure the day, and strew the coast.
  Now from the ports of Sicily once more,
The fleets depart to seek the Cyprian shore;
Where royal Richard sends to crave supplies,
Of needed stores for him and his allies.
But Isaac, then the sov'reign of the land,
Refuses to comply with his demand;
And, spite of ev'ry stipulation made,
He churlishly withholds the needed aid,
Which, like a Christian prince, (so stood the laws,)
He should have yielded to the common cause.
Rous'd by resentment at the foul offence
And base affront, the lion-hearted prince
Prepares the monarch's baseness to chastise,
Who his request thus proudly durst despise.
The soldiers instantly receive command,
To quit their ships, and hasten to the land.

The ready troops at the command proceed
To seize their arms, and disembark with speed;
Sibert amongst the rest undaunted goes,
Careless how destiny of him dispose.
Without a motive he adopts the strife,
Heedless of honour, and still more of life;
All that could stimulate to glory most,
In losing Eleanor, young Sibert lost.
Yet, tho' no mistress' smiles his heart may cheer,
Resentment nerv'd his arm, and aim'd his spear;
For where he fought, vindictive was his wrath,
And dire destruction mark'd his fatal path.
But soon the Cypriots, by superior might
O'erborne, relinquish the unequal fight.
Their prince a pris'ner, tyrant now no more,
The kingdom yields, and owns the victor's pow'r;
Who close the hapless captive king retains,
Loaden with infamy and galling chains.
Nor here his portion of misfortune ends,
The conq'ror he to Palestine attends.
There, to the Infidels, forc'd to proclaim
Great Richard's might, but most of all his shame.
At length once more from Cyprus they remove,
(Once the gay country of the Queen of Love,)
And strive with spreading sails, and lab'ring oars,
With speed to gain the hostile Syrian shores;
Nor long in vain their voyage they pursue,
Ere Jaffa's far-fam'd port th' advent'rers view.

Various and strange sensations now possess'd
Alike the sov'reign and the subjects' breast;
Some by the saints exhorted to depend
On faith, and gain salvation in the end.
Some, by their leaders taught to scorn alarms,
Rely on courage, and to practise arms;
One dreams of glory, others of disgrace,
And sad anxiety pervades each face!
But now the vessels strike the hostile strand;
All fears subside, and quick the warriors land.
Along the winding shores the fleets remain,
Their spreading camps wide occupy the plain.
Each their respective leaders rang'd around,
Or mov'd by the harsh trumpet's clang'rous sound;
Aloft in air the sacred ensigns wave,
Whose sign the Christian soldier courage gave.
Whilst all the martial host with busy care,
For the approaching conflict now prepare.
Refresh'd awhile, the hostile pow'rs proceed
To the commencement of the war with speed.
Seige follows seige, and fight succeeds on fight,
Nor discord rages more by day than night.
Great Godfrey's* prowess wide destruction spread,
And Richard's name the nation heard with dread.

* Godfrey, Count of Bologne. The name of Richard was so terrible in Palestine, that mothers to intimidate and quiet their clamorous infants, used to tell them that King Richard was coming, as nurses talk now-a-days of *raw head and bloody bones*.



Where'er amid the ranks of war he press'd,
The harlot Fortune hover'd o'er his crest.
And now the encreasing war more furious grows,
The Saracens their mightiest force oppose;
The Land of Promise shakes with loud alarms,
And Salem's city thunders forth to arms.
Christians and Infidels, with equal ire,
Menace revenge, with desolation dire!
Ere long the hostile pow'rs with martial rage,
In sight of fair Jerusalem engage;
Infernal vengeance stalks athwart the plain,
With carnage dy'd, and heaps of mangled slain.
Swords clash with swords, and shield encounters shield,
And death and discord rage throughout the field.
Amongst the rest, amid this scene of blood,
Young Sibert long superior force withstood;
With heaps of slaughter'd foes entrench'd around,
He, like a tyger, furious keeps his ground;
Wounded, at length, o'erpow'r'd, and out of breath,
Reluctantly he leaves the work of death!
And slow retiring, from the battle past,
Supported by a friend, to breathe his last!
Whom he adjur'd to promise on his word,
One last sad friendly office to afford.
This was, when dead, his faithful heart to bear,
Encas'd in gold, to Eleanor the fair!

The only token left, by which to prove
His matchless constancy and deathless love!
With various changes ended the campaign,
And Europe's sons their countries seek again.
Amongst the rest the friend of Sibert came,
With his sad present for the hapless dame;
Who, tho' another lord her hand possess'd,
He ne'er had gain'd an int'rest in her breast;
But mournful ever, tho' a wedded wife,
She with a husband led a widow'd life!
Who, jealous of the littleness of love
He shar'd in her, by ev'ry method strove
That little as it was, to render less,
By cruelty, which doubled her distress.
Sullen in rage, but in that rage severe,
Sir Hildebrand might stand without a peer.
Quite punctual to his charge, the faithful friend
Of Sibert, now his journey at an end,
To Eleanor, in spite of danger, went,
The faithful heart and casket to present.
But such was the determin'd will of Fate,
That, ere the stranger reach'd the castle-gate,
He met Sir Hildebrand upon the way,
Who forc'd the unwilling messenger to stay;
And, maugre each equivocating shift,
From him extorts his mission, and the gift.
With which well pleas'd, he to the castle hies,
Mix'd joy and vengeance sparkling in his eyes.

But carefully the fatal charge belays,
Nor by one act his foul design betrays;
But with an hypocritic meanness tries
The baseness of his purpose to disguise;
Appears to be more affable and gay,
And with his wife the evening chats away.
But schemes of dire revenge and hellish rage
Beneath this seeming calm his soul engage.
The ev'ning come, the knight all courteous grown,
Supp'd with his beauteous Eleanor alone.
"Cast off that pensive gloom, fair dame, (he cried.)
Nor thus for ever be the mourning bride;
What boots this grief that preys upon thy mind?
Can I, thy husband, be more fond, more kind?
For thee with plenty teems my spacious hall,
And are not all my servants at thy call?
Then let thy smiles, sweet Eleanor, impart
That joy that ought to cheer a husband's heart.
This ev'ning, as I rang'd along the grove,
I slew for thee, in token of my love,
The finest deer that e'er took archer's aim;
Its heart shall be thy supper, lovely dame!
Then eat, be cheerful, give the winds thy woes,
And let thy husband's bosom find repose."
  Mov'd by his courtesy and kindly treat,
With more than usual cheerfulness she eat.
And, as she thought his kindness was unfeign'd,
Consum'd the whole of what the dish contain'd.

The brutal monster, gladden'd to the soul
Thus to succeed in artifice so foul,
With laughter cried—“ Now, lovely lady, say,
How did you relish this your supper, pray?
I think you greatly seem'd t' enjoy the zest,
And so you might, when you shall know the rest.
That heart, which you so greedily have eat,
Once in the bosom of young Sibert beat!
In Palestine he fell! and, ever true,
Bequeath'd it as a legacy to you!”
Quite petrified with horror at the deed,
She answer'd not, but seiz'd the dish with speed;
And with her tongue she lick'd it o'er and o'er,
As if resolv'd on all, if it were more;
Nor spoke a word—nor from the room retir'd—
But rais'd a scream of horror—and expir'd!



THE UNFORTUNATE WANDERER.

COLD, cold blew the wind o'er the brows of King Harry,*
The hoar on the hether fell heavy and chill,
The day far declin'd, when, dejected and weary,
A trav'ller slow wound down the slope of the hill.
Lank famine and want in his face were depicted,
His limbs with the cold and fatigue seem'd constricted,
His looks spoke a heart with deep anguish afflicted,
And mis'ry had mark'd him with masterly skill.

To the mansion of wealth his weak steps were directed,
In hopes an asylum through pity to find;
But often by wealth are the needy neglected,
Their hearts are more cold than the tempest behind;
For spite of entreaties, the poor hapless ranger
Is thrust from the portal, 'midst darkness and danger,
No sympathy here for the sad sinking stranger;
The wild waste receives him, and cold blows the wind.

* A mountain in the eastern part of Cumberland.

By the side of a hedge, which the tempest was
tearing,
The wand'rer sunk down, his sad fate to deplore;
" Ah! Erin, (he cried, for his country was Erin,)
Dear, dear happy land! I shall see thee no more!
For here, by barbarity unprecedented,
I languish unseen, and expire unlamented,
Whilst all my complaints are from hearing pre-
vented,
And drown'd by the whirlwinds that round me
loud roar.

Oh, Albion! where lives now thy boasted humanity?
That clemency, partial, extends not to me;
No vestige I find of remaining urbanity,
Which if it once flourish'd, now ceases to be.
The savage who ranges the desert most dreary,
Whom reason ne'er taught, nor religion more
cheary,
Would not thus have spurn'd a poor wand'rer when
weary,
And left him to die at the foot of a tree."

I ask'd but a morsel to stay my keen hunger,
I ask'd but a shield from the cold and the rain,
With common compassion what claims can be
stronger,
But such with the selfish but seldom obtain.

For sordidly fearful of my sad remaining,
Unmov'd by my anguish, and deaf to complaining,
They thrust me away, all entreaties disdaining,
And left me to languish in mis'ry and pain.

"Bewilder'd, unknown, 'mongst a people inhuman,
Where pity ne'er dwelt her kind aid to impart;
With no kindly ray the drear waste to illumine,
No friend to support me, or sooth my sad heart.
Ah! little suppose you, my dear, dear connections,
My babes, my Alicia, what piercing reflections
Engage my sad bosom! the sad retrospections
Increase my keen anguish and double the smart!

Sick, sick is my heart, whilst around the storm musters,
The cold hand of death seems to sink to my soul;
Unheedful I hear the loud tempest that blusters,
Unmindful I note the big gusts as they howl.
Sensation scarce lives, oh! just heav'n, forgive me,
If, dying, the cruel I curse that outlive me,
Who neither protection nor pity would give me,
Expos'd to the rage of the storms as they roll."

"Whose he that exclaims? (call'd a voice, deeply sighing;)
Whose he that sustains all the rage of the storm?"
"Heed not (he replied) a poor wand'rer now dying,
To whom thy compassion no part can perform,

But if 'twas true pity thy heart actuated,
Thy purpose by heav'n shall be compensated,
And those who inhumanly spurn'd me be hated
For cruelty that would a demon deform."

"Live, live and despair not, (exclaim'd the kind stranger,)
Heav'n yet may restore thee to comfort and life;
And kindly support thee thro' hardships and danger,
To visit thy country, thy friends, and thy wife."
"Ah! no, (said the wand'rer,) each fond expectation
In me sadly sinks, being past consolation,
The cold hand of death fast arrests each sensation;"—
He sigh'd—and Death's silence concluded the strife!

Where sympathy sits in the soft heaving bosom,
The eye, still responsive, a tear can bestow;
But where rancour crops pity's delicate blossom,
Such tender emotions they seldom can know,
Think, think, O ye sordid disciples of malice,
Whose hearts to the cries of distress are still calous,
That fate, which the convict receives at the gallows,
As properly Justice on you might bestow.

ODO THE PROUD.

OF all the proud Normans to William that bow'd,
When England with dole was o'erspread,
Not one was more cruel, by all 'twas allow'd,
Than he erst ycleped Sir Odo the Proud;
For his name's yet remember'd with dread.

His castle, the strongest perhaps of the day,
Near the banks of the Solway then stood;
Around the usurper's domains widely lay,
His vassals were num'rous, despotic his sway,
But his title was founded in blood!

A fam'd Saxon lord, yclad Morcar the Brave,
Those manors had formerly held;
But Harold's sad fate to his countrymen gave
A blow that soon threaten'd the whole to enslave,
And Morcar his lands was expell'd.

Now forc'd a small portion to till for his bread,
Of his own once extensive estate,
The indigent life of a vassal he led,
His flocks the fair Hilda industriously fed,
And shar'd, quite resign'd, in his fate.

Fair Hilda for beauty as widely renown'd,
As Morcar for courage was fam'd;
With each female grace and each virtue was crown'd,
On her even queens might with envy have frown'd,
For the Rose of the North she was nam'd.

It chanc'd as Sir Odo the field one day pass'd,
Where Hilda was tending her care,
His eyes on the unhappy beauty he cast,
His passion was kindled, his heart flutter'd fast,
And he ardently gaz'd on the fair.

His pride and his pow'r each respect taught to scorn,
For virtue his bosom ne'er knew,
From Morcar what tho' his domains he had torn,
And he forc'd to drudge in a state most forlorn,
His Hilda must now be forc'd too.

Thus fir'd with desire, which brutality warms,
The tyrant rush'd on to the field;
The poor helpless innocent seiz'd in his arms,
And cried—" 'Tis in vain to refuse me those charms,
Which, maugre resistance, must yield."

Entreaty was vain where no pity was known,
Resistance was equally vain;
Her shrieks rent the air, Odo's bosom alone
Unmov'd could have heard such a pitiful moan,
But here could no pity obtain.

Her cries Morcar heard, and he flew to her aid,
For wings in his vengeance he found;
But poor was the effort, unarm'd, he assay'd
His Hilda's defence, for the tyrant's keen blade
Soon laid him a corpse on the ground!

Then quick from his hand the dire weapon she drew,
Which strait thro' her bosom she thrust!
And thus she exclaim'd—"Bloody tyrant, here view
A scene that ere long to thyself shall accrue,
The reward of thy rage and thy lust!"

Asham'd to behold, and distracted with rage,
Away to the castle he press'd;
But what shall his conflict of passions assuage,
Here sharper reflections his bosom engage,
And horror beat loud at his breast!

No longer the chace can Sir Odo delight,
No longer of pleasure can share;
Foul terrors torment him by day and by night,
Two stern bloody spectres are still in his sight,
And pride now gives way to despair.

He solitude shuns with solicitous dread,
Nor from company pleasure can take;
Or when on his pillow he lays down his head,
Expectant respose to obtain from his bed,
More dreadful to dream than awake.

The dying prediction of Hilda the fair
  Sunk deep in the knight's guilty breast;
Distrust and disquietude, join'd with despair,
Corroded his bosom and heighten'd his care,
  Whilst grandeur itself grew a pest.

The curfew had toll'd, and the hamlet was still,
  No sound near the castle was heard,
Except the faint sound of the murm'ring rill,
Or winds hollow whistling along the bleak hill,
  By which scarce the aspen was stirr'd;

When, lo! the great bell of the mansion was rung,
  As boding most dreadful alarms;
With horror and haste from his couch Odo sprung,
His sword by his side in confusion he slung,
  And call'd his domestics to arms.

To arms flew the servants, despair in each face,
  For none the occasion could tell;
Loud shouts and wild uproar surrounded the place;
The court and the castle appear'd in a blaze,
  And loud, and more loud rang the bell.

It seem'd as if hell had burst forth in a crowd,
  And fury permitted to range;
When still and anon was re-echo'd aloud—
"Come forth, thou base tyrant! thou Odo the Proud!
  For Morcar and Hilda, revenge!"

Sir Odo rush'd forth with his sword in his hand,
T' examine the plight of the place;
But, horrible! when he beheld the fell band,
And Morcar, who furiously tossing a brand,
Discharg'd it on Odo's wan face!

Quite stunn'd and confounded, he fell to the ground,
Blue flames seem'd his corse to enshroud;
A legion of spectres encompass'd him round,
Whilst each with his firebrand inflicted a wound,
Yelling—"Perish, Sir Odo the Proud!"

So said, the fell legion their clamour loud raise,
Triumphant, tho' dreadful the roar;
The castle was rent from the top to the base,
And dire devastation soon cover'd the place,
But Odo was heard of no more!

The villagers, strangers oft show to the place
Where once the proud fabric was seen;
The ground-plot the trav'ller may easily trace,
The ditches without, and the vast inner space,
And place where the portal had been.

Yet still, as they say, on that night in the year,
Round that place, by the moon's silver sheen,
A legion of furies, with horrible cheer,
Keep wassal, whilst torches and firebrands they bear,
And dreadfully dance round the green!

And as with their gambols horrific the crowd
  In movements mysteriously strange,
With hootings tremendous they halloo aloud—
"Down, down thou base tyrant! thou Odo the
    Proud!
  Thus we Morcar and Hilda revenge!"

FINIS

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